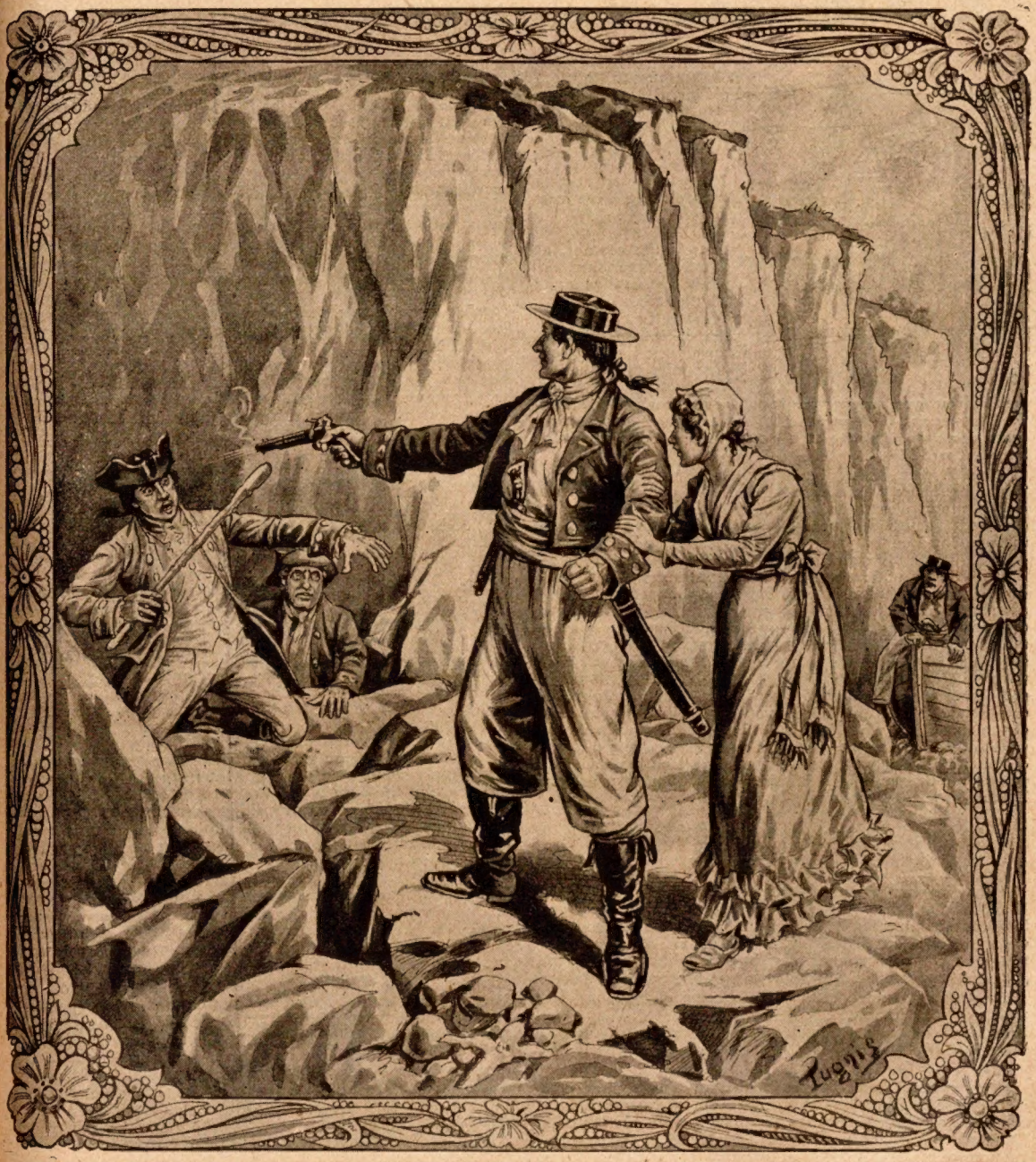
POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY



GOT A COUPLE OF BULLETS THROUGH HIM FOR HIS PAINS.

(See the Story of Margaret Catchpole).

Vol. II.—No. 22.

"Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canter awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paains:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braains."

—TENNYSON, "Northern Farmer" (New Style).

PART I.

ARE you old enough to have gone to the Gaiety Theatre, gentle reader, when Miss Nelly Farren was playing the part of Little Jack Sheppard? Whether you are or whether you are not, you must have heard the lines:

"There's the captain, as is our commandyer,
There's the boatswain and all the ship's crew;
There's the first and the second-class passengers
Knows what we poor convicts goes through."

Did you ever go over the convict ship that was lying in the Thames and off Margate? If so, you might have seen in the visitors' book a note by a lady: "How poor uncle must have suffered!"

Our heroine, Margaret Catchpole, was nearer to the "cannibal black" than ever De Rougemont was. The fact is, we must tolerate a little "side" from our Australian cousins. They had some real hardships to put up with in the land down under. They may, before they were dispatched on their life of adventure neath the southern skies, have had rather sketchy notions about meum and tuum. They lived those ideas down, and it is Young Australia that is finding a want of up-to-datishness in their fathers' old-fashioned respect for property. But Young Australia has little conception of what their grandsires "went through"—not on board ship: that were a flea-bite; not among the aborigines: that were child's play—at the hands of the parson-magistrate and prosperous landed proprietor in the days when the agricultural labourer received forty per cent. of his weekly dole out of the poor rates, when corn was taxed heavily, when things were so bad for the poorer classes that the ancestors of some of Australia's aristocracy could "stick it" no longer. "It will be all the same in a hundred years. Hang me up to Tyburn Tree. Transport me, if you like. . . .

"To-morrow I'm off for the Colonies,
To labour, to toil, and to dig . . ."

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, you Reverend Whited Wall, who sit chairman of the bench of beaks. May you long continue to commit poachers to trial, and may you some day get caught red-handed by the coastguard after you have bought a cask of hollands gin, in smuggling which some poor girl's sweetheart has got shot! Advance Australia!

Australia has advanced. When some of her sons find their way to a Suffolk Petty Sessions, they say, "Why go to Rouen or Toledo or Ravenna to see a bit of mediæval Europe? Here in Suffolk on a court day the folks are fed-up on mediævalism."

Saying this, Young Australia goes to the smoking-room of the Bull, at Woodbridge, where Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of Omar Khaiyyam, who had a great partiality for Cambridge Trinity "audit" ale, succeeded in making the landlord of his time, one Groat by name, serve his customers with Bass's "No. 1." You can't get it in Australia, or only with great difficulty. It makes people's tongues wag. The local salad, "pickled samfrey," a sort of sea-weed, makes one talk of local associations and of Margaret Catchpole.

Yes, Margaret Catchpole, the flesh-and-blood girl who left her country for Australia's good, the lass that loved a smuggler, there is the scent of the new-mown hay wafted across the footlights when your bonny form takes the stage. 'Twas in 1773 that you first gladdened your poor mother's heart with your earliest live utterances. We know the sort of country you inhabited, somewhere near Nacton; for nearly every public-house in Suffolk contains coloured prints of the "First Steeplechase on Record," an event which is nowadays reckoned as uncanonical. We can see you nursing your invalid sister, Susan; we have you ever before our eyes as the good fairy who made your father's home happy, your relations' houses, where you served as unsalaried hand-maiden, the abode of comfort and content. We follow you into domestic service, where you combined the duties of under-nurse and under-cook at the house of one Mrs. John Cobbold, who had married a man with fourteen children and expected additions to his family. Margaret, a couple of hundred girls such as you would settle the South African problem in two generations!

No followers allowed!

"What was it you said, you hussy?" her indignant mistress asked. "You've been hearing of that good-for-nothing smuggler, Will Laud, have you?"

Elizabeth Cobbold, wife of John Cobbold, father of fourteen children, of The Cliff, Ipswich, needs no further description from anybody. In Oriental countries a man with fourteen children buys a wife—any number, not exceeding four. In this England of ours such a man can always find somebody to share his home, provided it be a good one, and to look after his children. But such a woman is inevitably destitute of any atom of romance. She gave Margaret notice to leave her house. But Mrs. Cobbold has a chronicler who says: "It was a real heartfelt sorrow to that benevolent lady to be compelled for the sake of example to her other servants to discharge Margaret. But she could not do otherwise."

And in psalm-singing Suffolk circles (notice the alliteration) people seem to be not one whit further advanced than they were in the days of the French Revolution. The Rev. Richard Cobbold's unctuous writing passes as being the correct thing. Poor Margaret could not do as a girl would do at the present day—i.e., call a policeman and say: "My employer wants to turn me out of doors. My boxes are upstairs. It is not convenient for me to move them this evening. I will leave to-morrow on receipt of a month's wages in lieu of notice." In those days the domestic servant had no rights. Fear of what the neighbours would say shamed Mrs. Cobbold into letting Margaret stay until the end of the week, the girl having asked that as a great favour.

A few weeks later Margaret took a carriage horse out of Mr. Cobbold's stable, rode him up to London—seventy miles in eight hours and a-half—having herself had a glass of brandy and a biscuit at the Trowel and Hammer, at Marks Tey, where she gave the horse a feed of corn. She was arrested in trying to sell the horse at the Bull, in Aldgate, was committed to Newgate by the Whitechapel magistrate. Mr. and Mrs. Cobbold came up to London and put up comfortably at the Four Swans, in Bishopsgate, and, having "forgiven" the young woman, induced her to make a full confession and to sign a deposition, thereby placing the rope round her own neck. The story is too long to tell how she

had been made a catspaw of by the evil genius of the piece, one John Cook by name. Cook had told Margaret all sorts of fanciful tales of how her lover, William Laud, wanted her to go up to London in male attire. Margaret was desperately in love. The milk of human kindness that had fallen into her jug had been so diluted with the blue from the cow with the iron tail that no modern County Council analyst would waste his time in treating it as anything else than dish-water. In the country of the blind the man with one eye is a king. In Silly Suffolk it is considered the natural thing for a girl to submit herself lowly and reverently to any master or mistress's opinion of her sweetheart. Not so Margaret. She would have gone through fire and water for what she thought her duty, and her duty to her lover ranked first. But the Cobbolds owed Margaret not a little. Three members of the Cobbold family owed their lives to acts of Margaret's gallantry. Yet for the theft of one of Mr. Cobbold's horses Margaret is to be put on her trial at Bury St. Edmunds Assizes. On July 7, 1797, an interview took place

SHE WAS ARRESTED WHEN TRYING TO SELL THE HORSE.

inside Ipswich Gaol between Margaret and "this truly Christian lady" (Mrs. Cobbold; the epithet is quoted from the Rev. R. Cobbold's work.) Mrs. Cobbold endeavoured not to suffer Margaret to be deceived with any false hopes. She was well aware that the penalty of her crime was death, and that unless her instigating accomplice could be delivered up to justice she stood every chance of being made a public example on account of the great frequency of the crime. The only diversion of Margaret's mind at this period, from a fixed and undivided attention to heavenly things, was the one hope of seeing Laud. Could she but once see him she would then have no other wish but to die.

And she wanted Laud, even if he never again saw her alive, to have a good opinion of her after she had suffered the dread penalty. For on August 8, 1797, Margaret wrote from Ipswich Gaol to Mrs. Cobbold:

"HONOURED MADAM,—I am told that the judge will call upon me to know if I have anybody in court to speak to my character. Now, though I cannot hope, and, indeed, would not urge you to be present in court, considering the state you are now in" (the Rev. Richard Cobbold, "one of the sons of that excellent woman," was born on the 9th of September following, so he states in a footnote to his memoir of Margaret Catchpole), "perhaps a line from you would do that which I want. You know well, my dear madam, that it is not from any hope of its obtaining a pardon for me that I ask it; but it is from the hope that one whom I shall never see again may by some means catch a sight of it, and may think better of me than the world at large, who know nothing of me, can do."

Margaret showered blessings on Mrs. Cobbold's head and on the heads of all the little Cobbolds, and the next day she started in the prisoners' van for Bury Assizes.

If any reader desires to know the names of the members of the Grand Jury for the County and for the Liberty, he can find them all in the Rev. Richard Cobbold's book. Mr. John Bloomfield, auctioneer and farmer, was foreman of the petty jury. Lord Chief Baron Macdonald took his seat upon the bench in the criminal court. Margaret pleaded "guilty," and though the judge gave her permission to retract her plea, and told her that her plea of "guilty" would avail her nothing in the sentence which must follow, Margaret answered:

"I am not able now, my lord, to plead 'not guilty.'"

"Why not?" said the judge.

"Because I know that I am guilty."

This was too sound an argument to be disputed, and the judge did not attempt any further explanation, but said:

"Prisoner at the bar, it is my painful duty to address one of your sex in such a situation. I cannot possibly judge of your motives for committing such a crime. They do not appear in your confession, and I am at a loss to conceive what can have induced you to commit it. The sentence to which you have subjected yourself is death. Have you anything to say why this sentence of the law should not be passed upon you? Have you any friends in court to speak to your character?"

Margaret did not know what a nice place Australia was, for she talked a lot of rigmarole, saying that she would

prefer death to transportation, just as natives of the North West Frontier of India say they would prefer being hanged to being sent to the Andaman Islands. The judge looked at Margaret with mingled astonishment and pity. The prosecutor, as well he might, spoke up for Margaret, mentioning that she had saved the lives of three of his children, and stating that he believed the girl had been made the dupe of an infamous villain. Doctor George Stebbing, of Ipswich, behaved like a brick, and handed in a petition from many people who bore testimony to her good character.

Was there ever a judge in such a quandary as was the Lord Chief Baron on this occasion? Margaret Catchpole's nervous system was so overstrained that she was seeking to have punishment prompt and thorough, so as to effectually "wash her sin away." Those silly Suffolk evangelicals never, in all probability, read much of the doings of Saint Augustine. Saint Augustine found a great many of his followers seeking voluntary immolation. He had to put a stop to such goings on. He issued a "general order," showing the impiety of trying to force the hand of the Almighty

sentence would probably take place in Ipswich Gaol, and good behaviour might shorten the term to three years and a-half, or even less.

Again we must take a text from "Musical Comedy," which says, "They may wriggle, they may struggle, But I've got 'em in my eye," etc., etc., "and I'll have 'em by-and-by." Mr. William Laud, Margaret Catchpole's lover, was to find a temporary home for one year in Ipswich Gaol also, besides being ordered to pay a fine of one hundred pounds to the King. His property was seized and confiscated; smuggled goods were found on his premises, and he became a penniless bankrupt. It appears that during the month of March of the second year of Margaret's sentence, Mr. Gooch, officer of Excise at Lowestoft, and Mr. Burdell, of Aldborough, seized 880 gallons of gin belonging to Will Laud and his company.

We must hark back, for at present our readers know nothing about Will Laud except that he was a smuggler and loved by Margaret Catchpole.

We mentioned Margaret's dying sister Susan. She kept

SMUGGLED GOODS WERE FOUND ON HIS PREMISES.

by grabbing a martyr's crown. Margaret Catchpole (and her mistress, and the Rev. Richard Cobbold, when he inherited his mother's smug ideas) were all religious semi-maniacs. Their proper place, certainly Margaret's place, was the asylum—not the scaffold, or even the condemned cell. Margaret was given what she asked for, and was sentenced to death.

Tears of agony overwhelmed many in the court, but Margaret seemed to be less overcome by the sentence than by the kind words of the judge, who gave her such a talking to as has in the last six or seven years come into fashion again. (Lord Brampton, in sentencing Horsford, took twenty minutes by the clock. "Colonel Lynch" was even longer than that in being sentenced to death for treason, the judge, Mr. Justice Wills, however, omitting the words "May the Lord have mercy on your soul," thereby leaving everybody to infer that the death sentence would not be inflicted.)

Two days later the Home Secretary sent down a letter to the Lord Chief Baron authorising him to reduce his sentence if he thought fit. Result: Commuted to seven years' transportation (the minimum term for transportation). But there was trouble in getting female convicts to the colonies, so the everlastingly prophesying that Margaret would never marry Will Laud. What business have invalid sisters to go prophesying anything of the sort? We don't like Cassandras. Laud's father had been in Government employ as coxswain of the gig that plied between Landguard Fort and Harwich. Will Laud himself had been apprenticed to a ship-builder at Harwich. Now, in Harwich Harbour there is the junction of the Rivers Stour and Orwell, the former running down from Manningtree through a very muddy bed (there is just a little artificial "hard" against Mr. Ezra Dale's house, the Bristol Arms, at Shotley Gate, and a few similar "hards" higher up the river), the River Orwell running over a similar bed down from Ipswich. Beautiful scenery it is, at high water. At low water one is apt to think that the man who could run a cargo of tobacco across that mud must have earned his week's wages twice over. But there are other rivers besides these two—the Alde and the Woodbridge River, etc. Besides, on the North Sea side of Landguard Fort there is a sandy or shingly beach. When there is an off-shore wind, that is the very place for smuggling, if the coastguard could only be safely located in the taproom of one of the Felixstowe hotels. It was the natural thing that Will Laud

should sail under Captain Bargood, of Ipswich, an old hunks who lived ashore, owned several smuggling luggers, and a glance at his balance-sheet will show what a fine trade the game was :

PAGE 48, FOLIO 4,
OF THE
SMUGGLER'S LOG BOOK.
1st Voyage of

The "Stour"—built at Dovercourt, May 28th, 1787—purchased of Simon Simpson for £798 12s. 0d.—sailed in her myself to Lisbon, June 9th, 1787—profitable cargo—cleared, deducting all expenses	496	0	0
Ditto, September 9th, 1787—cleared	324	0	0
November 12th: Lost spars, anchors, and part of cargo—James Jordan and Sam Smith washed overboard—profit only	23	0	0
February 18th, 1788: Appointed Charles Easto to command her—12 men—Amsterdam—good run—cleared 283 tubs of real moonshine—442 bales—18 tea-chests—6 cwt. of tobacco—profit ...	416	0	0
March 23rd: Heavy gale—hard pressed by the rev. cutter—tubs overboard with sunken floats and chains—ran for Helvoet Sluys—escaped—recovered cargo—landed it at Sizewell Gap—profit	223	0	0
May 10th, 1788: Valuable cargo of nutmegs cleared off, and sold well—profit	647	0	0
July 18th: Ditto—Captain Easto ashore—watched—got off—fired upon by the coastguard—wounded—unable to command—John Luff appointed—stout fellow—crafty—good! good!—well appointed—made a good hit—brought cargo of Hollands—rum—profit	307	0	0
September 9th: Caught in a gale—put back.			
September 28th: No go—hard run—lost all—vessel escaped—three men killed, Simon Keeley, Thomas Burder, Will Woodard—better luck next time!	0	0	0
January 1st, 1789: Good beginning—all ashore—cargo safe—Easto recovered—two new boats—sent a present to Squire Norris—well taken—cleared profit	432	0	0
April 4th: Got aground on the North Veer—off safe—loss of rudder and mainmast—cargo damaged—carpets—cloths—linen—silk—damask—cleared, after losses, profit	98	0	0
June 27th: Mutiny on board, near the Dogger Bank—Captain Easto attacked—John Luff and five men fought for the ship—four killed, three wounded—home to recruit	0	0	0
September 10th: Sailed to the North—Baltic—cargo, skins—returned seas about—cleared profit	105	0	0
January 5th, 1790: All well—cargo landed—profit	371	0	0
April 7th: Ditto	300	0	0
July 3rd: Desperate engagement ashore—narrow escapes—two men taken—well bribed—expenses paid—kept well in prison—escaped—joined crew again	0	0	0
October 10th: Made a good voyage—lost one man—cleared profit	470	0	0
February 16th, 1791: Lost Captain Easto—steady man—shot on shore in the night—four men to eight—two coastguard killed—Luff brought cargo home—landed it—profit	220	0	0
April 3rd: Appointed Will Laud to command—John Luff mate—landed cargo Hollesley Bay—profit	340	0	0
July 3rd: All well—cleared	240	0	0
November 19th: Ship ashore—Felixstowe Beach—strong party of coastguard attacked the men—9 killed—Luff escaped—Laud wounded—expected to die—ship taken—condemned—crew broken up	0	0	0
Total profit of this ship	5,012	0	0
Cost 789 12 0			
Repairs, pay, etc. ... 840 8 0			
1,639 0 0	deduct	1,639	0 0
	paid me £	3,373	0 0

We cannot follow Will Laud over all his dangerous voyages. We may remark that when he was away there was one John Barry unsuccessfully wooing Margaret Catchpole. This Barry had a brother, an officer in the coastguard, who had marked Will Laud with his cutlass on the forehead. John Barry one evening accidentally happened to be on the spot when Will Laud was trying to steal away Margaret Catchpole on board of his lugger and to marry her in Holland. John Barry got a couple of bullets through him for his pains. And once John Barry thought Will Laud was really dead. He went and told Margaret Catchpole. With his rival out of his way, Barry hoped to capture the girl. But Margaret insisted on seeing the body. It was like Laud, but there was no cutlass scar on the forehead!

So John Barry went away disconsolately to some colony or other, giving Margaret a Bible with two five-pound-notes in it. Will Laud had given Margaret any amount of smuggled stuff, but Margaret never once touched it to benefit herself. As there always is in such cases, there was a neighbour to say that it was a pity to waste it. Meantime there was a reward for Laud's capture, but he purges himself of that, for he takes part in Lord Howe's victory, having been captured by the Press Gang. But he is again a smuggler, breaking poor Margaret's heart. He does once promise to give the game up after another twelve months. And once some sailor (of course, it was Laud) threw a hundred and

An old hunks who lived ashore.

thirty guineas at Margaret's feet and departed. The natural inference is that Laud was drunk on that occasion. For there was a disloyal comrade went up to Margaret Catchpole asking where Laud was. Margaret, suspecting that he wanted to earn a reward by giving up Laud to the police, struggled with the man, and he deliberately lowered her down a well, whence she was rescued by Mr. John Cobbold, at whose house Margaret was then a servant.

You see what a man Laud was. But magistrates and clergymen were cowards enough to let smugglers risk their lives in order that these magistrates and clergymen, who sat at home at ease, might drink Hollands gin at a cheaper rate than they would have to pay if they came by it honestly. Brave Will Laud was a king of a man compared with the likes of them. They were the proper occupants of the pillory. They it was who deserved to have their ears nailed to the pump. And as the Rev. Richard Cobbold does not say that his father and mother bought smuggled Hollands gin, but rather leads us to infer that they did not, we must in all fairness exclude Mr. and Mrs. John Cobbold from the above category.

This sum of one hundred and thirty guineas will be dealt with presently.

One day Margaret was hanging up the clothes to dry, she being then employed in the prison laundry. From the drying yard she could see through an oak palisade into the debtors' prison, and—you couldn't have knocked her down with a feather; she kept her presence of mind remarkably well—

when she saw the beloved face of William Laud, she "went on cutting bread and butter," as the song says, or rather, she pretended to be moving the clothes-horses, so as to hear the well-known voice, which sounded like music in her ears, say, "Margaret, is that you? How are you, Peggy?" In Margaret's excitement a heavy clothes-horse fell down with a clatter upon the stone pavement, bringing the governor and the turnkey at the same moment. Dr. Stebbing bled Margaret, treating her for an internal injury, and "it was

Captured by the press-gang.

a good thing he did so, for it reduced her to such real weakness as confined her some days to her bed, and afforded her time for reflection." So says the Rev. Richard Cobbold. It is well to be thankful for small mercies, for the next portion of our story is decidedly grim.

Her lover was practically under a life sentence. Not only had he an irreducible sentence of twelve months to get through, but he was to remain in prison until he had paid the fine of £100 to the Crown, and, as far as he knew, he had not got a copper towards paying the fine. By hook or by crook Margaret got the following letter passed through to Laud. It must have come like music in a sinner's ears:

"Felons' Cell, Jan. 10th, 1800.

"DEAR WILLIAM,—You may guess my surprise to hear you say that John Cook knew nothing about you; that he invented a lie to get me to steal the horse. This accords, however, with my beloved mistress's opinion. Oh! how glad I am that I did not let out the secret that I had money of yours in hand! I should have lost everything if I had. He, a villain, induced me to go to London, with the hope of seeing you at the 'Dog and Bone,' Lambeth. He told me that you were hiding from the fear of arrest, and had confided to him your place of safety. He even showed me a letter, purporting to come from you. Oh, what an artful villain!—what punishment he deserves!

"But, dear William, make yourself easy about the fine. I will send for my Uncle Leader before the time of your imprisonment expires, and the hundred and thirty pounds shall be given up to you. He shall pay the fine for you, and shall give you the remainder. You will own now that I am trustworthy. Oh! how happy I am that I did not make away with it, nor suffer others to do so. I kept it for you, and it comes into use at the moment it is most wanted. Nobody need know how it is disposed of; *only remember your poor Margaret, that she longs for the shortening of her confinement that she may join herself with your fortunes wherever they may be.*

"You will soon regain your liberty. I may have to complete my seven years here. But will you be faithful and wait for me? You promise fairly. You say you will live at Sudbourn, and try to get an honest living. Every hour of the day I am thinking about you; and at night I dream, sometimes that I am sailing upon the ocean with you, sometimes that I am living with my father and brother. But dreams are deceitful. I hope you will never prove such to me again. I am willing to join my fate to yours whenever I obtain my release. Pray God that may be soon. Oh, that it could come on the day of your own release! But come or not then, believe me ever, your affectionate "MARGARET CATCHPOLE."

Just about this time application was made to the Lord Chief Baron Macdonald, asking him to give Margaret a ticket-of-leave. Unfortunately, the crime of horse-stealing was extra rampant, and his lordship declined. Now, we have read Margaret's letter to her sweetheart. The words in italics are enough to convince anybody that Margaret did not need much tempting to make an attempt at escaping from Ipswich Gaol.

On March 3, 1800, Margaret was again hanging up the clothes to dry, and she heard Will Laud exclaim: "Margaret, what a capital ladder one of those horses would make if set against the wall!"

Cautiously did Margaret look along the passage, to see if anyone was near. She pretended to be busily engaged; at the same time she told Laud she thought the task too difficult.

"Why, that's not like my Margaret! Surely, when the governor goes to Bury with the prisoners, you can get out to my sister's at Sudbourn, Lucy Keeley! I will tell her to expect you."

"That will do me," replied Margaret. "On the 19th or 20th Mr. Ripshaw goes to Bury with the prisoners. On

Lowered her down a well.

Monday, the 24th, and Tuesday, the 25th, are our two great washing days. It must be one of those nights. Will you be waiting for me at the end of the lane, near St. Helen's Church?"

"I will be waiting for you, never fear. I will have a sailor's jacket and hat to disguise you in."

"Well, the trial is worth the risk. I will confide in you once more, Laud; but if you deceive me, then indeed I care not what becomes of me. Go! there is someone coming."

On the eventful night the clothes-horses were not left out in the prison yard!

TO BE CONCLUDED.

THE WAYS OF THE CRIMINAL

VIII.—BURGLARS AGAIN.

The Actress and Her Lover and the Policeman who had a Drink.

BURGLARS, as we have already stated, are nearly always ready-witted. They are quick to appreciate the dangers of any situation in which they may be placed, and oftentimes this characteristic saves them from the police. A few months ago a Parisian burglar, who, by the way, was believed to be an American, exhibited amazing daring. One of the French capital's best known and most popular actresses arrived at her flat some time after midnight, and after spending half an hour or so with a book, prepared to retire for the night. Arrayed in her robe de nuit the lady was just brushing her luxuriant tresses when some strange noises from her drawing-room attracted her attention. Thinking that her favourite kitten was playing havoc amongst the bric-a-brac, the lady proceeded in the direction of the sounds, and on opening the door was considerably astonished to see a man. He was tall and dark, faultlessly attired in evening dress, and about forty years of age. As the actress entered, the stranger dropped on his knees and commenced to pour forth a declaration of love. He said that he had watched her on the stage with admiration, that he had tried to see her at the theatre, and that having failed to do so, he had resolved to enter her residence even at the risk of being taken for a burglar. The actress

Mashing à la Française.

was much annoyed, but, believing the man's story, allowed him to go without raising an alarm. The stranger disappeared quickly when the door was opened to him, and the actress next morning found that before she had found him in the drawing-room he had abstracted from the drawers of a table all her loose cash and a valuable collection of jewels.

And whilst on the subject of burglaries in Paris, it will not be amiss if we recount the circumstances in which two dangerous gangs of French criminals were recently arrested. In May last the Paris detectives made a raid upon a mys-

Stocktaking.

terious mansion at Reuilly, a large suburb beyond the Bastille, and on the way of Vincennes. The house had long been a cause of wonder and surprise to the neighbours. In the daytime it was as silent as a sepulchre. The blinds were all drawn, and not a soul was seen entering or leaving it. At night all was changed, as if by magic. The rooms were brilliantly lighted, carriages and cabs containing men and women drove up to the door, and sounds of revelry were heard until the early hours. This was brought to the notice of the police, who discovered that the mistress of the house was a young and pretty woman who called herself the Comtesse de Gordove. She was in reality an ex-servant. It was also discovered that the "countess" received many shady persons of both sexes at her mysterious residence, and that it was these people who made the place ring nearly every night with merriment. When the police learned this they planned a raid on the establishment, and one night a strong force of detectives, armed with revolvers, surrounded the residence. A locksmith accompanied the raiders, and quietly opened the front door for them. Half a dozen detectives quickly and quietly ascended the stairs. On the first floor the chief of the police opened the door of a room, and saw inside, seated at a long table, which was covered with victuals and wine-bottles, eight men and two women. The latter were in full evening dress, and glittered with jewels. There was, of course, a great commotion, the women shrieking and the men swearing. "Let no one stir," shouted the chief of the raiders, but he was not obeyed. Some of the men rushed at him, others drew revolvers. The latter, however, found themselves covered by the revolvers of the police, and after a short struggle, surrendered. One of them, however, made a desperate attempt to disable his captor, vowing that he would die for the "Siren of Reuilly." This was the name by which the "countess" was known to her intimates. A search of the house was at once made, and a large collection of stolen property was unearthed. The mansion was, as a matter of fact, a burglar's den, and the "Siren of Reuilly" was the receiver of all the objects of art, furniture, books, pictures, and jewellery stolen by her male friends from houses in Paris and the suburbs. Amongst the booty was a collection of ornaments and vessels stolen from churches. In one of the rooms was seen lying on a bed a woman whose nose had been broken by a bullet. She had been in some distur-

bance, and was being treated by one of the men who was known as the doctor, and who had a well-equipped surgery in the house. The gang, it was discovered, had been in existence for a couple of years, and were responsible for a

An ingenious ruse that didn't come off

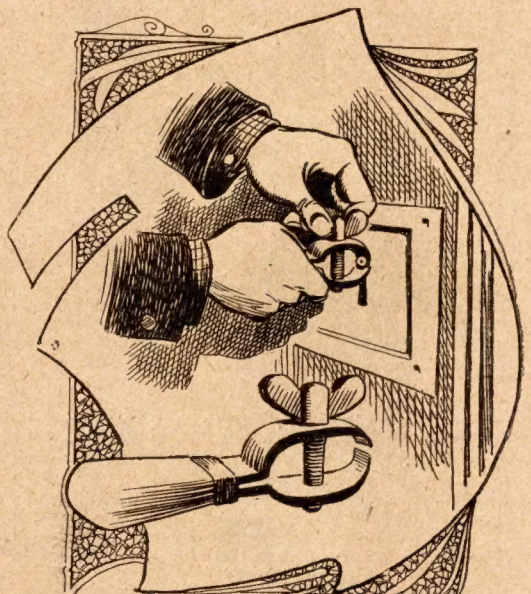
tremendous number of burglaries. The men were known by various nicknames such as the Marquis, the Count, the Zouave, the Ladykiller, the Octopus, the Fiddler, German Karl, and the doctor already mentioned. The Siren was the real chief of the band.

The second den was raided in May last, and also resulted in the discovery of a formidable band of burglars. Detectives in search of a man who had already been in prison, and was suspected of various thefts, called at a house which they had reason to believe was frequented by him. They were surprised to find the house fitted out with every modern convenience. The caretaker, when he learned the reason of the visit, was indignant, declaring that it was impossible that the tenant of the house could be a burglar. Nevertheless, the police resolved to make a search, and, entering the flat, found that it was furnished in the most luxurious fashion. Their attention was particularly attracted to a number of loaded revolvers and several tin boxes crammed with powder and fuses. Just as they were leaving the establishment a well-dressed man appeared at the door. As soon as the newcomer caught sight of the police he rapped out an oath and dashed down the staircase, with the detectives in hot pursuit. The man was caught after a short chase. "You are in luck's way," he remarked, as he was led off handcuffed. "I am the leader of the 'Sans Rivaux,' but my friends will avenge me." Subsequently it was discovered that this individual dwelt in a pretty villa at Alfortville, where he was known as a clever chemist. The chief of the detective staff proceeded thither and discovered a quantity of jewellery and material for the manufacture of explosives. Then the prisoner became communicative, and told the police that he was the head of a band which had members in most of the large French towns, that it had robbed banks and shops in various places which he particularised, and that the loot was securely stowed away. He was shortly to have been married to a very wealthy girl. Other arrests quickly followed, and amongst the papers found was an elaborate plan for the robbery of a Parisian bank which was set for two days after the arrests were made.

To return to English criminals. Some of the burglaries which come under the notice of the police are more remarkable for the daring with which they are carried out than for anything else. There is a case in point. The night policeman in a provincial town was just going off duty, and was making his final call at the most important premises on his "beat." It was his duty to report that all jewellers' and pawnbrokers' shops were safe. He found all doors and windows secure, and reported so to the constable who relieved him, whose duty was to immediately visit the premises in question. This the freshly arrived officer proceeded to do. In about ten minutes he reached the shop of a pawnbroker in a large way of business, and found the principal door open. This was an unusual circumstance, and the constable, stepping inside to investigate, saw a man who appeared to be very busy, and was in his "shirt sleeves," taking various articles from the show-cases and stands in the window. "Good morning," said the man, adding a word or two about the nuisance of stocktaking, which, he added, caused him to come down a couple of hours earlier than usual. The incident would have ended here, in all probability, but for a slight oversight on the part of the "stocktaker." (He was that, by the way, in more senses than one.) The policeman had no suspicion that anything was wrong until his eyes fell upon a formidable-looking jemmy lying on the counter. With the instinct of the born detective, he also noticed that the implement unscrewed into three sections, and concluded that it was just the sort of tool a burglar would be most likely to carry with him.

Unfortunately for himself, the policeman was indiscreet enough to point out this fact, and before he could reach it, the "stocktaker" had seized the jemmy and aimed a terrific blow at the man in uniform. Luckily, however, the policeman's helmet nullified much of the force of the blow, and he only sustained a slight wound, from which, however, blood flowed pretty freely. The constable immediately drew his baton and closed with his assailant. A blow from the truncheon placed them on level terms, and a desperate struggle ensued. Blood was flowing profusely, and when the affair was ended the shop looked like a slaughterhouse. For over a quarter of an hour the men wrestled and rolled over and over upon the floor, until finally the constable forced the burglar through the door on to the footpath. There assistance was speedily forthcoming, and the burglar was removed to the lock-up. Both policeman and robber were bathed in blood, and thoroughly exhausted. The plucky officer was promoted—the burglar got seven years' penal.

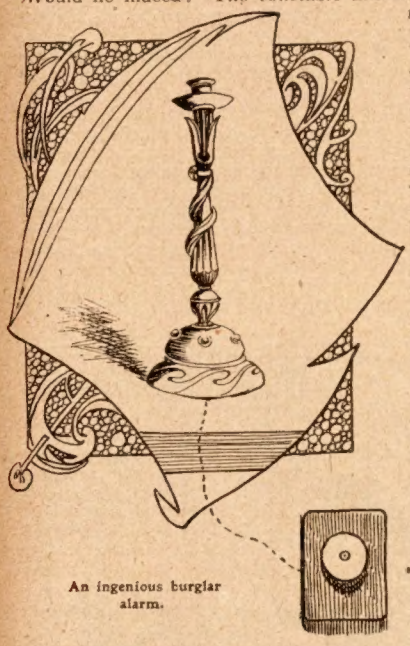
Another impudent burglar overstepped the mark and gave himself away to an astute policeman. The incident occurred in Dublin, and has a fine Hibernian flavour about it. The officer was passing a certain public-house when he noticed



An artful thumbscrew grip.

someone moving about inside the bar. Peering through the window, he saw a fully-dressed man who, catching sight of the constable, at once left the bar and opened the door. He remarked that he was very pleased to see the policeman, saying that he was the barman, and had come downstairs to in-

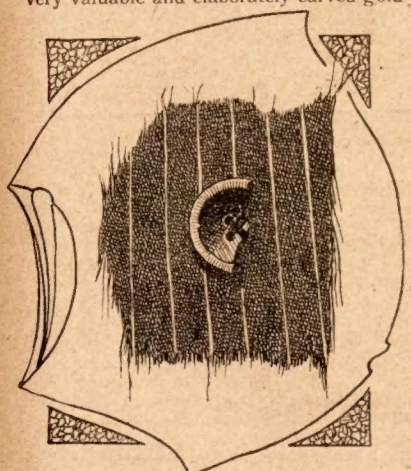
vestigate the cause of some strange noises which he had heard. He had failed, however, to find anything wrong, and was just going back to bed. Would the officer have a drink? Would he indeed! The constable had no suspicion of the man, and accepted the kind offer. The night was chilly, and a little whisky would take the edge off the breeze. So the "barman" proceeded to get the whisky. Watching him in the bar, the constable was struck by the fact that the man displayed a strange lack of knowledge as to where the drinks were kept, and this aroused his suspicions. Hesitating to arrest the man, the constable lingered in the bar for some time, and then, struck with a bright idea, drop his glass on the floor. It smashed with a resounding crash, and in a minute or so the landlord of the house was standing in the bar very much surprised at what he found.



An ingenious burglar alarm.

Householders, it may be mentioned, have a habit of leaving keys in locks, under the impression that if a burglar breaks into the house he will be unable to penetrate further than the room he first enters, because he will be unable to pick the lock; they forget, however, that the burglar is up to all the dodges on the board, and do not know that he likes to find keys left in the locks. In the illustration which accompanies this our readers will see how the arrangement works. The burglar carries with him a neat, strong thumb-screw. He screws this to the small portion of the key which protrudes from the inside of the lock, and is able to unfasten the door with the utmost ease.

A neat burglar trap came to light the other day. A gentleman in the West End had presented to him a pair of very valuable and elaborately carved gold candlesticks. The owner of these precious ornaments was terribly afraid of burglars, and each candlestick stood upon a specially prepared bracket, which was electrically connected with a loud bell. It was so arranged that as soon as the candlesticks were lifted the bell would ring, and raise an alarm. The apparatus worked with wonderful success. About three weeks after it was fitted, and about two o'clock in the morning, the household were awakened by the clamour of the bell. Downstairs rushed the master, revolver in hand, and he was just in time to see a man dash out of the open window of the dining-room, and, scaling the wall of the garden, disappear into the darkness.



The broken button.

Next week we shall describe the doings of portico thieves, with special reference to the clue of the broken button and bit of frayed striped cloth, which our artist has depicted for your inspection.

HANGED IN THE GAOL IN WHICH HE WAS BORN.

The Stepaside Tragedy.

Told by the Official who tracked down JAMES REILLY, the Murderer.

"To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung."
—SCOTT, "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

THE village of Stepaside is distant about seven and a-half miles from Dublin, on the road leading through the most picturesque portion of the county to Enniskerry. It is one of those small villages that are to be found in the outskirts of many parishes in Ireland whose distinct boundaries are lost in the contiguous mountain wastes.

At the time of which I write (1893) I was a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and on the morning of Whit Sunday, May 21, in that year, I was awakened by a constable from the village of Stepaside, who informed me that a brutal murder had been committed at Jamestown, which was about a mile further on from his station. He also said it was believed that the dead man was Bernard Cox, an insurance agent, who had not returned to his home the previous night. I lost no time in putting on my uniform, and, having despatched, as was my duty, telegraphic reports to the Government and heads of the force, was soon driving rapidly to the scene of the murder.

On arriving at the spot I found a crowd of people collected round the corpse, which was in charge of the police, who kept the people at a distance from the body of the murdered man. He was lying on his back on a strip of grass which bordered the road on one side. After a careful survey of the scene it was clear to me that the man had been attacked whilst on the footpath on the opposite side of the road. He had been stunned by a blow from some weapon, then dragged across the road in a zig-zag direction, as if the assailant had been undecided where to hide the body. Fearing, or, perhaps, hearing, the approach of someone, he had endeavoured to carry the body through a gateway into a field, but the victim must here have regained consciousness, and made a desperate struggle for life, as the grass was torn up all about the gateway, and it was very evident that Cox had made determined efforts to save himself. It was in this fearful struggle that the murderer had showered blows on his head, beating in his skull and literally battering out his brains. His hands were badly wounded, probably in his attempts to ward off the blows aimed at him by his assailant, several of his fingers being broken in two or three places. His jaw was broken, and he was so fearfully beaten as to be almost unrecognisable.

The green plot surrounding the body was simply deluged with blood, and the stone wall was splashed with the life's blood of the murdered man. Both sides of the road were bordered with trees for about a mile, and, the branches meeting, formed a complete leafy arch. It was a lovely spot, and one that should have banished all thoughts of evil from the murderer's mind. One could scarcely realise that so charming and peaceful a place could have been desecrated by such a foul and bloody deed. Away in the distance was visible a long, whitewashed, thatched building, situated on a small eminence, but, with respect to the general locality of the country, in a delightful vale, which runs up for miles between two ranges of dark, well-defined mountains. The part where the murder was committed is particularly beautiful and romantic. The hills stand out in gigantic relief

against the clear blue of the sky, and the prospect from the spot—the gateway, where the fearful death struggle took place—is highly pleasing and capable of being compared with any in Ireland for softness, variety, and that serene lustre which reposes only on the surface of a country rich in the beauty of fertility and improved by the hand of taste and industry. And there, on that bright May morning, with the sun piercing the leafy arch above with spears of yellow light, the murdered man lay, his disfigured face looking to the sky, his clothes torn, bloody, and mud-stained, his hands cut, broken, and blood-stained, his skull battered in, and his brains protruding.

Although there were fearful evidences of the desperate struggle, it was impossible to take models of foot-prints on account of the heavy rain which had fallen during the previous night. When I had finished my inspection of the vicinity of the body I caused it to be lifted up, and found beneath it a square bar of iron, about twenty-four inches in length, which was, no doubt, the implement with which the murder had been committed. The motive for the crime was soon made apparent, as I found the pockets of the deceased turned out, and some small copper coins were also found under the body, showing that the murderer had felt disappointed at the result of his find. It struck me as a noteworthy incident, for future guidance, that Cox's pipe, tobacco-pouch, and purse were missing.

Having concluded the various formalities which my position as Head Constable of the district rendered incumbent on me, I placed some policemen in charge of the body, with instructions to inform the coroner and to obtain the necessary permission to have it removed. I then commenced gathering information from the by-standers, but was not able to learn anything which in any way afforded a clue to the murderer. It seemed to be the general belief that the murder and robbery were the acts of tramps, and, indeed, this belief was so prevalent that several men who happened to have lodged in the neighbourhood, and who were unknown, were arrested on suspicion, in my absence, though they were all subsequently liberated.

It would weary my readers if I entered into the details of the various little incidents and failures I experienced on that Sunday. I had for several weeks previous been quietly engaged in endeavouring to locate a private still, which I believed was regularly worked not far from the house I have referred to in the opening lines of my story. I had been watching several men for some time, and of one in particular I had great suspicions.

Strange to say, I quite lost sight of him from twelve o'clock noon on the day but one before the murder—Friday—and, knowing that Saturday was invariably a busy day at the, as yet, undiscovered still, I thought I had a clue to the murderer. The missing man was an idle, worthless fellow, who had already "done" ten years for Fenianism, and, in my opinion, was capable of anything. He never worked, yet always had money, and I had the strongest suspicion that he was the assassin. How I spent hours in searching for him, and eventually found him in bed in a little public-house in the city of Dublin with a broken leg, interviewed the doctor who set the fractured limb on Friday night—a perfect alibi—all this I need not describe. Suffice to say that I wasted a lot of valuable time in a wild-goose chase.

However, I stuck to my task doggedly, and, having failed on one scent, I quickly sought another—and found it. I received a little item of news at a distance of several miles from Stepaside that set my heart in a flutter. It was to the effect that the driver of a porter-van from Blackrock, name unknown, was seen speaking to Cox about eight o'clock on Saturday night, near the scene of the tragedy. It was somewhat late in the day when this little clue was received, and I thought it advisable, and at once resolved, to make it the ground-work of my future investigations. I accordingly returned to my station, partook of some refreshments, changed my uniform for mufti, and proceeded to Blackrock, which is a populous and fashionable township some four miles from Dublin. For some time I could make no headway whatever, but once more Dame Fortune favoured me. I walked up to a public-house door, and was met with the query, "Bonâ-fide, sir? Where did you sleep last night? Is it three miles from here? Was it drink or pleasure brought you?" Having answered these questions satisfactorily, I was allowed inside, and there interviewed the publican. He admitted that his van was at Stepaside on Saturday, and that the driver was the man at the door who had questioned me. On interrogating him he told me he did meet a man of the description of the deceased, and that a bread-van driver also met him (Cox) and stopped to talk to him. This man's name, he told me, was Brack, and he lived at Golden Ball, a village near to the scene of the murder, and generally spent his Sundays in Bray. I was soon on my way, by express train, to this town, but further inquiries were unavailing, and I was unable to find my man. I hurried back to the station to catch a train for home, but found that the last one had gone some time, and I was obliged to make terms with the driver of a jaunting-car to convey me home by road. Whilst making my bargain with the car-driver, a man came up and spoke to a policeman near by, saying, "Lor', sir, how can I get home to Golden Ball? I have missed the train." I replied that, as I would pass by Golden Ball, I would give him a seat onthe car. He thanked me, mounted to the seat beside me, and we drove away.

I introduced the subject of the murder, and then he told me that he had seen me by the body in the morning, but went away when he heard me asking questions. I pressed him for information, and he answered that he was not going to turn informer, but after some gentle persuasion he admitted that his name was Brack—the very man I had gone to Bray to find! He told me he was speaking to Cox about

I at once charged him with the murder.

8.30 p.m. on the previous evening (Saturday), but said that the deceased was afterwards joined by James Reilly, and that they disappeared from his view round a curve of the road. Brack added, "If Reilly be innocent, why was he not at the scene of the murder this morning as well as the rest of us?"

I dismissed the car at Golden Ball, said "Good night" to Brack, and proceeded to the house pointed out to me by the latter as the one where Reilly usually lodged. It was now about one o'clock on Monday morning. I had not far to go, and, in response to my knock at the door, the occupier of the house—a working-man—opened it, and, in answer to my question, informed me that Reilly was asleep in the back room. I went through the kitchen, and found my quarry lying on the earthern floor with his coat and a sack over him, and his head on the strangest pillow I have ever seen—a block of stone! He arose quickly when he saw me bending over him with a candle in my hand, and I at once charged him with the murder, adding the usual caution respecting any statement he might make, but he made no reply.

Noticing that his boots appeared to have been recently washed, and that there was a dark stain, like blood, on them (which, by the way, on analysis afterwards proved to be the case), I obtained a pair of the workman's boots for him, and took possession of his own. I made a rapid survey of the room, which was quite destitute of furniture, but found noth-

ing except the sack already alluded to. I took the prisoner into custody, left the house at 1.30 a.m., and proceeded towards Stepaside.

It would be impossible to describe my feelings as we walked along, the murderer and myself, in the stillness of the night towards the spot where the crime had been committed. Along that road, scarce thirty hours before, Cox had walked in the full vigour of manhood, and we were rapidly approaching the spot where the man by my side had mercilessly slain in most ferocious fashion the inoffensive insurance agent. I must confess to a feeling of fear—a supernatural fear—quite apart from any apprehension I may have had of attack from the prisoner. The night was dark and somewhat stormy. Black clouds rolled over the hills about us, and the outlying cattle sought the calmest and closest corners of the fields for shelter. The trees and young groves were tossed about, the wind sweeping in hollow gusts through them with that hoarse murmur which deepens so powerfully on the mind the sense of dreariness and desolation. The moon was half gone, and only a few stars were visible by glimpses as a rush of wind left a temporary opening in the sky. The appearance of the heavens was angry and lowering, particularly at that point where the light of the moon fell against the clouds, from a seeming chasm in them, through which alone she was visible. The edges of this chasm were faintly bronzed, but the dense body of the masses that hung piled on each side of her was black and impenetrable to sight. A sombre gloom surrounded everything; a deep veil of clouds overhung the whole horizon; yet the light was sufficient to give occasional glimpses of the rapid shifting which took place in this dark canopy, and of the tempestuous agitation with which the midnight wind sighed to and fro beneath it.

As we approached the blood-spattered scene of the murder my fears grew more intense, and I dropped a pace behind my man, gripped my revolver more tightly, and quietly lifted the hammer from half to full cock; then with my left hand I unscrewed the top of my flask, which was in the pocket of my overcoat—it will be remembered that I was in civilian's clothes—and, drawing it out, I took a good drink. The ardent Irish spirit warmed me and braced my nerves, but there was still some of that supernatural fear with me which we Irishmen are prone to—a feeling attributable, no doubt, to the baneful habit of parents frightening their children into obedience with stories or threats of fairies, ghosts, and banshees. An appalling sense of loneliness took possession of me as we neared the leafy arch beneath which poor Cox's life had been so cruelly battered out. I had in my left hand the parcel containing the blood-splashed boots of the prisoner, and when I wanted to get at my flask I pushed this parcel into the pocket of my coat, and felt for the metal bottle. After unscrewing the stopper in my pocket, I dropped it therein, and then had the drink. I next pushed the flask back into the pocket, which was nearly filled by the boots, groped about with my fingers for the stopper, and, after some time and with no small amount of difficulty, screwed it on again. Then I withdrew the parcel, and felt more at ease. Whilst this was being done, Reilly walked steadily on, turning neither to the right nor to the left, with his head bent slightly forward. I kept my revolver in my pocket, the muzzle pressed hard against the corner thereof, and pointing directly at the middle of the prisoner's back, and I would have fired through the coat-pocket had he made any attempt at escape or assault. My index finger was laid straight across the trigger-guard, the tip just touching the farther side, and ready to slip on to the trigger at the first sign of treachery. By the time I had replaced the top of my flask and withdrawn the boots from my pocket we were well within the gloom of the leafy canopy, the aisle of green down which, some two hundred yards farther on, I had, a few hours before, examined the corpse of the man whom the miscreant now walking before me had sent to his last account. The night wind sighed wearily through the overhanging boughs, and not a sound was heard save the fluttering of the foliage, the whispering of the wind, and the fall of our footsteps on the hard highway.

I RAISED MY WEAPON SO AS TO COVER HIM.

When nearing the fatal spot I was impelled by curiosity to see how the prisoner would behave. I had drawn my revolver from my pocket and lowered the hammer, but on arriving within fifteen or twenty yards of the gateway, where the struggle had taken place and where the bloody deed was consummated, I once more drew the hammer to full cock. The "click" made Reilly start, and I, fearing a sudden outburst on his part, stepped back a pace and raised my weapon so as to cover him. He glanced round at me, then bent his head forward again, and walked on faster than before. A

dozen steps brought us to the fateful place, and I could see the dark stains here and there, which I knew were those of the murdered man's blood. Reilly looked quickly to the left—the side where the gateway was—then to the right, hesitated, stopped for the fraction of a second, and then, throwing his head still further forward and lower down, he strode on at such a pace that I had some difficulty in keeping up with him. "Easy, my man!" said I; "we have plenty of time before us," and he immediately dropped back into his original stride, but made no reply to my remark.

I have already referred to "a long, white-washed, thatched building," which, situated on a small eminence, was visible from the spot where the murder was committed. I have also alluded to the fact of my having been engaged in an endeavour to discover the whereabouts of a private still which I had every reason to believe was regularly worked in the vicinity of the house above-mentioned. In about ten minutes after passing the fatal spot we arrived opposite this house, and the cool wind, which blew directly from the direction of this building bore to my nostrils the unmistakable and pungent odour of burning peat. I kept one eye on my prisoner, dropped back quietly another pace, and fixed my other eye on the little hillock whereon the house stood. I had killed two birds with one stone, for I distinctly saw the glare of a fire—faint, it is true, but unmistakable—shooting up in fitful gleams against the black hillside. I knew that the country people were all in bed by that time—it was nearly half-past two in the morning—and the domestic fires all out long since, so that I could only account for the smell of the peat and the sight of the flames by the assumption that the still was in full blast. This afterwards proved to be the case. The poteen makers, knowing that I had left the neighbourhood to pursue my investigations into the Stepaside tragedy, and not expecting my return either so soon or at such an hour, had decided that it would be an excellent opportunity to have a night's work at the still. The man I had seen in the morning at Dublin with a broken leg was one of the gang, and had sent a messenger to say that I was busy looking for "Cox's murderer." This story of the still I hope to tell in some future number of FAMOUS CRIMES, but must return to Reilly and the high road to Stepaside. We walked on steadily for some time, and before long the outlying houses of the little village loomed through the darkness, and I was thankful when our feet felt the paved street of Stepaside, and more so when, a few minutes later, I had my prisoner safe in the strong-room and I was seated behind a stiff glass of whisky by the barrack fire.

Of course, the verdict at the inquest was "Wilful murder," and James Reilly was brought before the magistrates at Dundrum Petty Sessions in due course, and, on my application, was remanded for a week, to enable me to complete my evidence. He was eventually committed for trial on the capital charge.

Further searches at the scene revealed the umbrella, tobacco-pouch, and purse of the murdered man, both the last being empty. They were found adjoining the road where the assassin hurried upon hearing somebody approaching, and where he had investigated the contents of the purse. I spent many days on the case about the neighbourhood of Stepaside, and received numerous rebuffs from the female members of families principally, though I usually left them on excellent terms, chiefly by the judicious distribution of a few coppers to the children and the bestowal of some words of praise on the little ones. By dint of hard work, untiring energy, close investigation, and judicious questioning, we succeeded in forging a chain of evidence—circumstantial, it is true, but so complete and connected, without one missing or even faulty link—that the Lord Chief Justice commented very favourably thereon in his charge to the jury.

The case stood as follows: Bernard Cox and his wife resided at Stepaside, where he carried on business as an insurance agent. He was a most inoffensive man, of mild and kind disposition, often paying the arrears of monthly premiums out of his own pocket due by persons whom he knew could not afford to pay them at the time, thus preventing censure and fine to those persons. He was frequently importuned by Reilly for money and tobacco, which he invariably gave him. Cox travelled on foot periodically to Enniskerry and other places to transact business, and on the day of his murder had done so, and Reilly, evidently believing that he would return with a large sum of money in his possession, had waylaid and killed him; but in this the murderer was disappointed, and this disappointment was shown by his having thrown some small bronze coins on the ground, as I have already mentioned. I may here say that, on picking up these coins, I noticed that they had been thrown down with some degree of force, the marks of the edges of a couple of them being clearly visible in the soft soil. Cox only had a few shillings in his possession when he was assailed by Reilly. I discovered that he arrived at Golden Ball about seven o'clock on Saturday evening, and was invited by an acquaintance to take some refreshment at the public-house there. He partook of a "small whisky," and, when proceeding towards his home, met the driver of the porter-van, then John Brack, and was finally joined by Reilly farther on. After that nobody, excepting the prisoner, saw him alive again. Several witnesses proved that Reilly kept aloof on that day, and was seen to seat himself on the wall which ran down either side of the road, and where, in all probability, he hatched his diabolical plot. One stranger, casually employed in the neighbourhood, swore he saw Reilly on the fatal Saturday afternoon with a bar of iron in his possession, partly concealed up his sleeve. Another witness stated that he passed by the scene of the murder at such an hour that Reilly must barely have had time to escape without being seen; but this witness said he met no person on the road, nor heard any noise.

Brack was the principal witness. The workman's wife in whose house Reilly lodged, and where I arrested him, said that whilst they were at supper, about nine-thirty on the Saturday evening, Reilly drove the door violently in, without waiting for it to be opened, and as he appeared so pale and frightened, she asked him if he had seen a ghost. He made no reply, but went straight into his room.

He was tried before the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Peter O'Brien, at the Commission of Oyer and Terminer for the County of Dublin, on the 2nd August, 1893. Mr. Serjeant Dodd, Q.C., and Mr. George Wright, Q.C., prosecuted, and as no counsel appeared for the prisoner, Mr. Harney (instructed by Mr. W. J. Hanmore) was assigned by his lordship on Reilly's behalf.

He was executed in Kilmainham Prison on the 2nd September, 1893, the prison where, strange to say, he was born. Whilst undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for theft, his mother gave birth to a son—James Reilly—whose fate it was to be hanged in the prison wherein he first saw the light of day.

Reilly told his solicitor, after being sentenced, that the love of tobacco and the want of it made him commit the murder. His victim, Bernard Cox, was a man somewhat below the average stature, and of rather delicate but pleasing features. He wore side-whiskers only, his hair was grey, and he was about fifty-six years of age.

Reilly was about thirty-two years old, with brown hair, had rather repulsive features. He wore dark clothes and cap, and had a slight halt when walking, as if one leg was shorter than the other.

There were present at the execution only the sub-sheriff, C.C. (the prison doctor), the Rev. Father Kennedy, and some members of the visiting committee. The members of the Press were not allowed to be present, but were admitted to an interview with the governor at 8.20 a.m., when they were informed that everything had passed off most satisfactorily. Scott was the executioner. Dr. Carte said that this was the second execution he had witnessed by Scott, and that in both cases there had not been any or the slightest hitch.

Reilly walked firmly to the scaffold, and repeated the prayers after the priest in a loud voice. He was given a drop of 7ft. 9in.

Lord Avonmore and John Philpot Curran.

WHEN Curran, the eminent Irish lawyer, was pleading on circuit, he was frequently interrupted by one particular judge, Lord Avonmore, who often in Curran's speeches stopped him with "Mr. Curran, I know your cleverness, but it is quite in vain for you to go on. I see the drift of it all, and you are only giving yourself and me unnecessary trouble." At length Curran grew tired of this repeated anticipation and jumping at conclusions by the learned judge, and on one occasion addressed himself to Lord Avonmore as follows: "Perhaps, my lord, I am straying, but you must impute it to the extreme agitation of my mind. I have just witnessed so dreadful a circumstance that my imagination has not yet recovered from the shock." The judge put his hand to his ear and craned his neck forward in order not to miss a single word of the exciting episode. "Go on, Mr. Curran," he said.

"On my way to court, my lord, as I passed by one of the markets, I observed a butcher proceeding to slaughter a calf. Just as his hand was raised a lovely little child approached him unperceived, and, terrible to relate—I see the life-blood gushing out still—the poor child's bosom was under the butcher's hand, when he plunged his knife into—into——" "Into the bosom of the child!" exclaimed the judge, greatly moved. "Your lordship sometimes anticipates—it went right into the neck of the calf."

WILLIAM CALCRAFT
PUBLIC EXECUTIONER
FROM 1829 TO 1874
FROM THE ONLY KNOWN EXISTING PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM

The Life of William Calcraft,

PUBLIC EXECUTIONER
FROM 1829 TO 1874.

ONE is apt to give an involuntary shudder at the very mention of the name of a hangman, and though we know that this is but a foolish prejudice, we cannot but think what a gruesome occupation he has chosen, and we wonder what pressure of circumstances drove him to sustain his life by taking that of others. We feel curious to know what manner of man the public hangman is, what his feelings and thoughts are when about to execute or having executed a fellow being, whether he chose his profession from a morbid desire of witnessing a man's death struggles, or whether, possessed of a homicidal mania, he, with the cunning of the lunatic, saw a way in which he might gratify his lust for blood and legally murder those who have forfeited their lives by transgressing the laws of their country.

One of the most celebrated and best known of our public executioners was William Calcraft, who for a space of forty-six years was the officially recognised hangman throughout the country, though in reality his only permanent post was in connection with Newgate and under the Corporation of the City of Lon-

don. Calcraft plied his trade when hanging was in fashion, and carried out the last "dread sentence of the law" through all the eventful and tempestuous times of the first half of the last century, when criminals were tried and sentenced to death on a Friday and executed, in rows of from three to six, on the following Monday. By George IV. 9, June 27, 1828, the execution of a murderer was fixed for the next day but one after that on which he was sentenced, and hence it was that criminals of this class were tried on a Friday. Sunday being a *dies non* in the eye of the law, they received the benefit of an additional day.

The public executioner was mentioned as a person of high rank in the year 1039, and at the present day the High Sheriff is nominally the executioner by virtue of his office. That the laws relating to capital punishment have of late years undergone great modification is clearly proved by the following tables: Harrison's "Description of Great Britain," published in 1577, states that 72,000 thieves and rogues suffered death in the reign of Henry VIII., which is at the rate of about two thousand a year. In the ten years from 1820 to 1830 there were 797 criminals executed in England alone, but as the laws became less stringent and the death penalty was abolished for transgressions now punishable in a lesser degree, the number of executions greatly decreased, and in the three years ending in 1840 they numbered only sixty-two.

Commencing with 1783, criminals were executed in front of Newgate, but in later years they paid the last penalty of the law within the walls of the prison. Up to 1832 the bodies of persons executed were handed over to the surgical profession for dissection, but in that year the practice was abolished. An accurate history of crime and criminals, such as we are now supplying in FAMOUS CRIMES, has long been wanted, because a great deal of the history of the times is always involved in the predominance of particular crimes and in the doings of criminals. It is well known and generally admitted that a very natural and intense interest is excited in the mind by every minute detail connected with the crime of murder, and this interest is shared by rich and poor alike, and not confined, as some would have us believe, to those in the lower grade of the social scale.

The subject of my story has had a great deal of opprobrium cast upon him, has been reviled by some and despised by others, but we must not forget that, so long as the death penalty is inflicted in England, some man must be engaged to carry out the extreme sentence of the law, and he who is employed for this purpose cannot in any way be held responsible for the acts of his superiors. And now, with these few remarks, I will proceed with my story.

William Calcraft was born at Chelmsford in the year 1800, and was the eldest of twelve children. His parents were in poor circumstances, and he was sent to a free Sunday school, where he received some instruction in the rudiments of "the three R's." Whilst yet a boy he came to London, where he had a brother who was a ladies' shoemaker, and for him William sometimes worked, but he never followed the trade of shoemaking, nor was he ever apprenticed to it, as is generally believed. He worked at various things, at one time being a porter in a large brewery and at another a butler to a gentleman living near London. He lost his parents when still young, and this did not tend to increase his progress in life, but he nevertheless struggled on, and when not in regular work, like a sensible youth, he took anything that he could get, being in no way particular what he worked at so long as he was able to earn an honest crust.

He was a smart, active young fellow, full of life and energy and animal spirits, though in his later days he became somewhat morose. He married when twenty-five years of age, his wife being five years his senior, and three years after this event Calcraft took the first step which finally led him to the position of public executioner. On the 8th December, 1828, Joseph Hunton, the Quaker, was executed for uttering forged bills of exchange. It is not my purpose or within my province to enter into the details of this crime, which will be fully dealt with in due course in FAMOUS CRIMES, but I must refer to this in particular as being the means of bringing Calcraft into notice. Three others suffered on the same scaffold with Hunton—viz., John James, Joseph Mahony, and James Abbott—but the Quaker was the central figure and the source of attraction to the immense multitude which congregated opposite Newgate on that morning. It is on record that on no previous occasion had a larger number of people assembled to witness an execution. Threading his way through this vast crowd, and selling pies as he went, Calcraft might have been seen, having taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the assemblage to earn a few shillings.

During the time that the execution was in progress Calcraft had remained silent, and had temporarily suspended the sale of his pies, but immediately the struggles of the men had ceased he again commenced to sell his edibles. A man was busily engaged in close proximity to the scaffold in selling beer from a huge can to those of the crowd whose thirst required and whose pockets permitted a draught of the liquid. As Calcraft worked his way past the gallows he saw the executioner come from beneath them, apparently weak and faint, and heard him call to the beer-man, who, however, failed to hear him, whereupon Calcraft stepped up to him and offered to procure a draught of ale or porter for him, an offer which the hangman gratefully accepted. A conversation followed between the pair, in which Calcraft, in order to emphasise his assertion respecting the hard times he had experienced, expressed his willingness to take to the hangman's "line of business," whereupon the latter informed him that he intended to "turn it up shortly," and promised to say a word for Calcraft if ever an opportunity occurred.

The hangman's name was James Foxton, and he was acting in place of old Tom Cheshire, temporarily incapacitated through illness.

Calcraft thought little more of Foxton's promise, but some months after the meeting above referred to he received a request by special messenger, to attend at Newgate on the following morning. He duly presented himself at the appointed time—ten o'clock—and was shown into the presence of the Governor of Newgate (Mr. Wontner), one of the undersheriffs, and several aldermen. He was informed that his name had been mentioned to them by Foxton, and was asked if he thought he could flog two or three boys. Calcraft replied that he was willing to try, and was eventually told to present himself at Newgate at eight o'clock the following morning, when he would receive all necessary instructions. After this interview he regretted having spoken to Foxton, but he was determined to keep the promise he had just given, and accordingly was at the Old Bailey the next morning for the purpose of receiving some information respecting his avocation. He was told by one of the prison warders that he would have to flog four boys, and after a few instructions in the flogging yard he inflicted the necessary chastisement on the youths, and did it so effectually and satisfactorily that he was engaged by the authorities for the same purpose on all future occasions, at a fixed salary of ten shillings per week. Foxton had informed him that he would soon be obliged to resign, as he was in very poor health, and would be quite unable to perform his duties much longer, and it was intimated to Calcraft that he was to succeed Foxton as public executioner.

Calcraft was present at several executions, and had excellent facilities, as Foxton's assistant, for seeing how they were carried out, and during this period of what might be termed his apprenticeship he was fully impressed by what he saw with the painful and difficult duties of a public hangman.

He heard much from Foxton of the dreadful scenes that had taken place on the scaffold, and he witnessed many others while acting as the hangman's assistant.

John Foxton died on the 14th of February, 1829, and for a time was succeeded by the notorious Jack Cheshire, he and Foxton having been co-partners in the office of hangman for some years. Cheshire was a disreputable sort of person, was constantly drinking in the lowest tap-rooms and mixing with the vilest and most disreputable characters, and, in fact, with anybody who was willing to pay for drink for him. He was getting somewhat advanced in years, and the authorities thought it advisable to secure the services of a younger and more temperate man, and therefore it was made known in certain circles, after the interment of Foxton, that the post of official executioner was vacant, and that it would be filled up as soon as possible by the election of the most eligible candidate that could be obtained.

It may be mentioned that at the execution of Hunton, the Quaker, Cheshire should have officiated, but was in a state bordering on delirium tremens, and Foxton was hurriedly sent for to do the work. Had it not been for Cheshire's habits of intemperance Calcraft might never have become the chief hangman of England.

There were but two applications for the vacancy—one from a man named Smith and the other from Calcraft—and a meeting of the Court of Aldermen took place for the purpose of appointing an executioner in the place of John Foxton. The applications of the two candidates were read to the meeting, and after some discussion it was resolved unanimously that William Calcraft be appointed common hangman and executioner for the City of London. Calcraft was thereupon called in and informed of his appointment, and on Saturday, April 4, 1829, he was duly sworn in.

It is impossible to give even the most meagre details of the crimes committed by the long list of criminals that Cal-

craft in the course of six-and-forty years sent to their last account from the scaffold, and to look at the list makes us marvel at the fearful amount of crime that has so long existed. I can only refer to the principal criminals who suffered death at the hands of William Calcraft.

His first official execution was that of Esther Hibner, who was found guilty of most horrible cruelty to six workhouse children, and of wilful murder of one of them, Frances Colpett. So incensed was the mob with the woman, and so repugnant did her crimes appear, that Calcraft was loudly cheered again and again as he adjusted the noose round the culprit's neck and hooked the other end of the rope on to the fatal beam. So violent was the culprit after her sentence that it was found necessary to put her in a strait jacket, and she was hanged with it on. Scarcely half-an-hour after the body of Esther Hibner had been handed over to the surgeons for dissection, Calcraft was on his way to Bury St. Edmunds, where he executed a man named George Partridge, a farm-labourer, who had murdered a little boy, six years old.

It must be borne in mind that in those days railways were unknown, and travelling by stage-coach was very slow work. Calcraft, therefore, was quite unable to attend all the executions in England, to say nothing of Scotland and Ireland, so that there was of necessity a hangman for nearly every county, Calcraft being obliged to attend at Newgate to carry out the floggings, though he was deluged with applications to go into the country to execute criminals.

On the 27th July, 1829, Calcraft executed three men at Newgate—James Butler, Edward Martelly, and Henry Jubilee Conway—the first for "unlawfully, maliciously, and feloniously setting fire to the floor-cloth manufactory of Mr. Thomas Downing," and the two last for forgery. There was considerable excitement about the execution of Butler, who was but nineteen years of age, the evidence against him being purely circumstantial. He himself asserted his entire innocence, and great efforts were made to obtain a reprieve, but they were unsuccessful, and he was executed, as already told. Conway and Martelly struggled very little, but Butler died hard and writhed and twisted for some time.

Amongst the many memorable incidents which took place in Calcraft's first year of appointment was that of the partial falling of the gallows at Carmarthen Gaol. The culprit was a young man named David Evans, who had been found guilty of the murder of a young woman named Hannah Davies, with whom he had been keeping company. There is no record as to who the executioner was, but as soon as everything was ready for the execution he stepped behind the scaffold and drew the bolt. The drop caught a chain that fastened a portion of the gallows and the rope broke, the unhappy man falling on his face, not seriously hurt, but much shaken. There were loud cries from the spectators of "Shame! Let him go!" and "No, no; hang him!" and the half-hanged man, having regained his feet, came to the front of the scaffold, and exclaimed:

"I now claim my liberty!"

"Oh, no," replied the sheriff; "the law must be carried out."

"No, no," responded the prisoner; "you have hung me once, and you have no power or authority to hang me again."

A scene of great excitement now ensued, the culprit struggling to get down from the scaffold and make his escape among the multitude. It was then discovered that the gallows was shaking and threatening to collapse altogether, the beam at the top nearly being off the uprights. On examination being made it was discovered that the carpenter who erected the scaffold had omitted to put the coupling pins in, and the beam at the top was nearly coming down on governor, chaplain, prisoner, and all engaged on the drop. In a short time the structure was got ready again and the culprit brought up a second time. He was deadly pale with fear, and the shock had evidently so shaken his nerves that he was scarce able to stand. He was under a strong conviction that, having been hanged once, he had fulfilled the requirements of the law, and that they had no legal right to hang him a second time. So convinced was he of this that he refused to ascend the ladder, and they were compelled to use force to get him up. He spoke in Welsh and also in broken English, saying:

"The gentlemen in London do not hang anyone twice. It is against the law. I have read it. You will be committing murder if you hang me now."

Whereupon the executioner once more stepped forward, and said:

"You are greatly mistaken. There is no such law as that to let a man go if there is an accident and he's not properly hung. My warrant and my order is to hang you till you are dead. So up you go, and hang you must till you are dead."

"No, no, gentlemen," said the prisoner, turning to the sheriffs; "give me time and inquire what the law is. I am certain you have no authority to hang me now."

The hangman now exhibited signs of impatience, and, seizing the culprit once more, he pushed him under the beam, and, with the aid of two of the officials, adjusted the noose round his neck again, and, descending the steps quickly, drew the bolt. The drop fell and the unhappy wretch went down with a sickening thud. The executioner seized his legs, and very soon all signs of life had vanished, and thus ended one of the most disgraceful scenes that have ever taken place through the carelessness of the gallows' officials. Though the name of the executioner is not mentioned, there is little doubt that it was Calcraft.

When Foxton died old Tom Cheshire was getting advanced in years, and he used to have occasional jobs, and was generally regarded as the one who by right, having been deputy or assistant executioner for some time, should have succeeded him in his position. Calcraft, however, who was in the very prime of manhood, and who bore the reputation of being a very determined man, of great nerve and physical power, was at first frequently called on to carry out the provincial executions, and, as all England and Wales, with the exception of Yorkshire, were considered within the provinces of the London executioner's duty, there can be little doubt of his being the hangman on this terrible occasion. The fact of the culprit having questioned the right of the executioner to hang him a second time caused much discussion, and the matter was thoroughly thrashed out, and it seemed to settle the point and to prove that the law requires the hangman to hang a culprit until he is dead.

It may be mentioned here that the Corporation, not liking to throw old Tom Cheshire out of office, retained him, nominally, in their service till his last illness and death. He lingered on for some time, quite unable to personally perform the work of his office, and when he died, Calcraft, his assistant, succeeded him in his full office, and was finally appointed executioner for England and Wales.

It was not at all generally known at the time who the hangman really was on some particular occasions, for he frequently wore a mask, so that his face might not be recognised. This precaution was rendered almost necessary by the very vindictive feeling among the lower classes against all executioners, and Calcraft, knowing this, tried to keep his appointment a secret; and when it began to be known, it was reported that he was one of the assistants at the execution of Thistlewood and his accomplices for the Cato Street conspiracy. This, however, Calcraft always strenuously denied, and there seems to be no reason to doubt the veracity of his assertion.

It will be of interest to know the exact ceremony of taking the solemn oath of the executioner, which Calcraft took in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall. There is no more curious custom among the quaint old customs of England than the taking of this fearful oath, and nothing could possibly be more abhorrent to any person of feeling than the terrible words of this ancient oath. The swearing in of the official hangman has always been considered a solemn and awful ceremony, and it was always carried out in the most impressive and grave manner.

When the office of hangman became vacant it was customary to assemble together with great pomp the Recorder of London and his secretary, the Clerk of Arraigns, the Lord Mayor and his chief clerk, the Sheriffs and the City Marshal, the Governors of Newgate and Horsemonger Lane Gaols, and one of the Crown Judges, together with the Town Crier, officers of the peace, javelin men, and other officers. After due proclamation, and when some days had elapsed to permit of the receipt of applications and the proper filling up of a list containing the Christian and surnames of the candidates, they would meet at an appointed time soon after the hour of midnight in secret conclave, the Crown Judge being seated at a bench, elevated somewhat and covered with black cloth, and wearing dark caps trimmed with scarlet, and underneath on a large scroll were the words: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man also shall his blood be shed." All the other officials were dressed in their full civic costumes, scarlet robes, wigs, and gowns, some holding their wands, others their respective batons of authority, and various insignia of office. The Recorder then announced that the court for choosing and swearing in of an executioner of felons and traitors was now sitting, according to the laws of the ancient realm, etc., after which the crier cried out, "God save the King!" and the whole assembly responded, "Amen!" A bell now began to toll the funeral knell, and in a few moments the judge

asked for the name of the selected candidate to fill the solemn office of Executioner of England, and the Sheriff replied :

" The man we have chosen to be his most gracious Majesty the King's Executioner, my lord, is William Calcraft."

" Bring in a well-sharpened axe," responded the Sheriff; whereupon the Keeper of the axe brought in a very wide-bladed axe, sharpened to a very keen edge, and placed it on the judge's table. This was the axe that had been used for beheading traitors. Then the Sheriff said :

" Bring in the usual leg-irons, handcuffs, and other fetters," and in obedience to the command the Keeper of the irons brought in the leg-irons, handcuffs, and other manacles, and laid them on the table, the bell during this time solemnly tolling the death knell.

" Now," said the Sheriff, " bring in the halter and a pair of white caps and the beheading knife, well sharpened." These were then laid on the table by the Keeper of the halter, straps, and knife.

" Bring in the candidate now," said the Sheriff, and the doorkeeper threw open the door and called William Calcraft. In a few moments Calcraft walked in. He was a somewhat short, thick-set man, about 5ft. 6in. in height and weighing probably about 11½st. He was slightly pock-marked, had a somewhat large mouth, thick lips, and coarse, short, black curly hair, and was clean-shaven. He was ordered to kneel and take the oath of secrecy in his office, and this having been done, the Sheriff said :

" Let him now be sworn, and take in the most solemn manner the solemn oath of his most gracious Majesty the King's Executioner." Calcraft, still kneeling, then took the oath, the prescribed form being that the candidate laid his left hand on the axe and his right hand on the Bible, and then, in the most solemn manner, repeated the following oath after the Clerk of Arraigns :

" I do hereby most solemnly swear to hang or behead, or to draw and quarter, or otherwise destroy, all felons and enemies of the peace of our lord the King and of his subjects, duly sentenced according to law, and that I will do the like unto father, mother, sister, or brother, and all other kindred whatsoever, without favour or hindrance, irrespective of sex or age. So help me God ! "

During this time the judge held over his head the great sword of justice. The knife, the axe, the halter, and the manacles were then given into his hands, and it is recorded that he seized them eagerly and with evident happiness at his perfect installation into his awful office. On the conclusion of the oath and his receiving the gruesome weapons of justice the executioner was then commanded to rise. A thick black veil was thrown over his head, so as to conceal his features, and he was led out of the court amidst the groans of the assemblage, the tolling of the bell and the withering words of the judge, " Get thee hence, wretch ! "

When we picture to ourselves that terrible scene at the dead of night, and realise the awful and dreadful duty the executioner undertakes—to hang draw, quarter, behead, or otherwise destroy any human being condemned by law to die, no matter how near or dear—it is not to be wondered at that the whole assembly shuddered at the idea of such an oath, and gazed with curiosity, not, perhaps, unmixed with loathing, on the man who, for the munificent sum of twenty-five shillings per week, was willing to take that oath and literally perform it, and that after he had sworn to do so they should all show their detestation and abhorrence of his office as to send him from their presence and hasten his exit by a storm of execrations. No wonder the executioners seemed to shrink from being publicly known and recognised as the public hangman. It is said that most of Calcraft's friends and associates, on hearing of his appointment, shrank from him, and no longer cared to associate with him. It is a fact, however, as we know, that when he sought the office he was in great poverty, having been compelled to become, for the time being at any rate, an itinerant vendor of pies. He had tried to obtain work, and was unable to do so, and he was therefore thankful for the appointment and willing to accept it, because it offered him the certainty of a living, though the obligations would be painful and the work terrible to contemplate.

At the same time, though the occupation which Calcraft had adopted was by no means an enviable one, and though the duties were odious, Calcraft has been described by those who knew him personally as a good neighbour, a convivial companion, a dutiful husband, and a good father to his offspring, and these, it must be admitted, are traits of character which prove that he was not altogether the callous, hard-hearted, unfeeling being that many would conclude he must have been from the nature of his occupation.

After his appointment he was very desirous of appointing a deputy as assistant executioner, but the sheriffs would not consent to this, and Calcraft was greatly disappointed, and asked a reason for their refusal, as he pointed out that all his predecessors had been allowed to do so. He was then informed that the legislature very shortly contemplated the abolishment of hanging for all crimes except murder, and this would greatly lessen the work he would have to perform, and that therefore no assistant would be required. It would be difficult to define the feelings of Calcraft on this point, for though he received a regular salary for his work, whether the hangings were many or none, there is no doubt he would be the loser in the matter of perquisites, which at one time were very numerous and at times valuable. For many years the executioner had been allowed to have the criminals' clothes and all property found on them at the time of their execution. These were usually sold to exhibitors, and at one time a good sum could always be ensured from Madame Tussaud for the wearing apparel of any notorious malefactor, with which to dress the wax presentment of the culprit.

There used to exist also amongst some classes of people a morbid desire to possess some relic of a terrible crime or criminal, and it has been known that the rope with which they have been hung has been disposed of by the executioner at from one to five shillings per inch. In addition to his salary of twenty-five shillings per week, Calcraft had five pounds per quarter allowed him from the county of Surrey for the executions he would have to perform at Horsemonger Lane Gaol, and with these his perquisites from the dead men's clothes and fees from his provincial engagements, and the money he made by the floggings he administered at the gaols, he was in receipt of a tolerably large income annually. For every person he flogged he received the sum of five shillings, and one of the receipts for this task reads as follows :

" Received from the Sheriffs of Middlesex, ten shillings for flogging two boys at Newgate.

" WILLIAM CALCRAFT."

In June, 1831, a boy named John Any Bell, aged fourteen, was executed by Calcraft at Maidstone Gaol for the murder of another boy of thirteen named Richard Falkland Taylor. About forty thousand people witnessed the execution.

When Calcraft went to the pinioning room to put the straps on the culprit the poor boy began to cry piteously, and, falling down on his knees, prayed for mercy. Calcraft told him that he was obliged to carry out his orders, and that he (the prisoner) must submit, whereupon he stood perfectly still whilst the straps were adjusted, and then walked quietly to the scaffold. When he reached the drop there was a very sad scene, the unfortunate youth falling on his knees before the multitude and calling out :

" Oh, pity a poor boy ! Pray for a poor boy, so that I don't go to torments ! All you people take warning by me ! "

The assemblage gave vent to expressions of sympathy for the lad, and, the uproar becoming very great, Calcraft quickly put the rope round his neck and adjusted the noose. When the boy had finished his prayers, Calcraft told him to get up, then put the cap over his face and drew the bolt. The drop was a new one and did not work very smoothly, which caused the boy to linger some short time, a slight twitching being seen for two or three minutes. After the body had hung an hour it was cut down and taken to St. Thomas's Hospital for dissection.

Nothing, perhaps, in the whole history of crime caused such widespread fear in London as the horrible crimes of the Burkers, and the dreadful acts of the resurrectionists. Soon after the execution of Burke for his numerous murders in Edinburgh, in conjunction with Hare, their deeds were extensively emulated throughout the United Kingdom, and there was scarcely a village or town in the country where there were not rumours of people missing, of graves being rifled of their dead, or of corpses being stolen from the houses of their relatives. Depots had been established for the sale of dead bodies in Scotland, a similar place was in existence at Dublin, and a third was discovered in London. Burke had confessed to having murdered nineteen people for the sake of selling the bodies for dissection, and the Scottish graveyards were overhauled almost nightly for subjects. A large number of dead bodies were seized by the authorities at the Dublin depot, before referred to, whilst being shipped on board the steamers for transit to Scotland, many of them being packed in piano-cases to avoid suspicion, and labelled " Pianos, with

care." There was no doubt that many of them had been murdered, and it was equally beyond doubt that a large number of persons had been lured into the "depot" under various pretences and murdered there by the ruffians in waiting.

About a year after these discoveries the magistrates of London received frequent anonymous letters, asserting that there was a sytem of wholesale murder being carried on in London for the purpose of securing bodies for dissection, and the magistrates asked publicly for further information. It was realised that murder was reduced to a business, and the country was horrified from end to end at the thought that there was no safety, either for the living or the dead, from the body-snatchers, the country being at length aroused into indignation and horror. Some of the surgeons promised to assist the law in the matter, and the distinction of bringing some of the infamous wretches to justice was gained by Dr. Partridge, of Lancaster Place, Demonstrator of Anatomy at King's College, London. The story of how, through his instrumentality, the noted resurrectionists and murderers, Bishop, Williams, and May, were brought to justice will be told in these pages in due course. I need only say here that the two first-named were executed by Calcraft in 1832.

In the beginning of the year 1830, four men, named Thomas Maynard, William Hewitt, William Leslie, and Stephen Sandford, were executed at Newgate, the first for forgery, the second for sheep-stealing, and the two last for burglary. Both Cheshire and Calcraft officiated as executioners on this occasion.

On the 9th July, 1830, Tom Cheshire died at his house in Bell Court, Giltspur Street, having held the position of "assistant finisher of the law" to Foxton for many years, and it was very soon after this event that Calcraft's solemn installation, which I have already described, took place. A few days after Cheshire's death notice was given in the House of Commons by Mr. Ewart that he intended in the next session of Parliament to move for leave to bring in a Bill to abolish the punishment by death for stealing cattle and for stealing in dwelling-houses, and this was soon followed by a general movement to abolish the punishment of death for all crimes except murder.

Among the first persons executed by Calcraft after being appointed chief executioner was Captain Moir, a gentleman well known and generally respected. It appears that he found a man, named Malcolm, fishing with a net from the side of his farm at Stanford-le-Hope. He ordered the man off, and threatened to destroy his net. Malcolm became abusive, and Captain Moir threatened him, whereupon the man went away, but was followed by the captain. He stopped at a place called Shelhaven Creek, and was again ordered off by Captain Moir, but the man replied that he had a right to net there, whereupon Moir pulled a pistol out of his pocket and shot him in the arm. Malcolm went to a surgeon and had the wound attended to, but eventually died of lockjaw, and Moir was tried in July, 1830, for murder before Lord Tenterden, found guilty, and sentenced to death. When Calcraft adjusted the noose, Moir said, "I bear no animosity to anyone; I die in peace with God and man. I hope God will have mercy on me, and sustain my poor sister and my poor wife and children." Calcraft then drew the bolt and the unhappy man was launched into eternity. He was highly connected by birth and marriage, being the brother-in-law of Sir James Gardiner Baird, Bart., and first cousin to Sir William Rae, the Lord Advocate of Scotland.

The first parade of the new police took place on the 25th September, 1829, when they mustered eight hundred strong, and in August, 1830, Calcraft executed a man named William Sapwell, alias John Smith, for the murder of Policeman Long—the first man among the new police who died whilst in the execution of his duty.

There were a number of men tried during Calcraft's first year of office for various offences on the sea—slave-dealing, piracy, and other illegal acts—and two of them, George Huntley and William Watts, charged with piracy, were found guilty at the Admiralty Court, and sentenced to be executed at Execution Dock, Dockhead, Wapping. The sentence was duly carried out by Calcraft on December 16, 1830. This month was an exceedingly busy one for Calcraft. The Reform riots resulted in the arrest of nearly three hundred persons, and a special commission was opened at Winchester on December 18 to try the rioters. At the first sitting of the commission a great many were sentenced to transportation for life, others for various shorter terms, whilst some were sentenced to death. A great many more were brought to trial during the commission, making the total number close on six hundred. The judges went to Salisbury, Hampshire, and other places, and then returned to Wiltshire to try the remaining prisoners. Many of those condemned to death for rioting and incendiarism were youths of eighteen and nineteen years of age.

James Ewen was executed at Chelmsford for setting fire to a barn, and the principal witness against him was a notoriously bad character named Richardson. Ewen maintained his innocence to the last, but he was hanged in company with a man named Bateman in front of Chelmsford Gaol. When Calcraft had placed the halter round Ewen's neck the latter said:

"This is very tight."

Calcraft then noticed that the rope was not long enough, and the prisoners had to stand on the scaffold waiting till he had spliced another rope. When this was done the nooses were again adjusted, and, the bolt being withdrawn, both men swung in the air, kicking and writhing in a fearful fashion. Calcraft's next execution was that of some boys, who were condemned to death for setting fire to a haystack on Penenden Heath. It was resolved that the execution should take place on the heath, and the gallows was erected on the very spot where the stack originally stood. Two of the prisoners were brothers—Henry and William Packman—aged respectively eighteen and nineteen years. A man named Dyke was condemned to suffer with them for an offence of a similar nature. They were driven in a cart from Maidstone Gaol under a strong escort, and when they came underneath the fatal beam Calcraft first put the rope round Dyke's neck. The two brothers looked on, perfectly appalled, whilst this was being done, and then Calcraft proceeded to adjust the ropes round their necks. When everything was ready the two lads shook hands, Calcraft whipped the horses away, drawing the cart from beneath the unfortunate trio, and they were left hanging in the air. They struggled hard for a time, and after life was extinct they were left to hang for an hour in sight of the assembled crowd, and finally cut down

In the first week of January, 1831, the special commission already referred to sat at Winchester for the purpose of trying a large number of rioters and incendiaries. Six prisoners were sentenced to death—viz., J. T. Cooper, H. Eldridge, J. Gilmour, Robert Holdaway, James Arnalls, and Henry Cooke—but four were respited, and only Cooper and Cooke executed by Calcraft. From Winchester he proceeded to Kingston, where he hanged a man named James Warner for setting fire to a flour-mill at Aldbury, and then went on to Horsham to execute Edward Bushby for setting fire to a stack of wheat. Whilst Calcraft was pinioning him the unfortunate culprit said:

"I hope to the Lord I am going to a better and a happier world," and immediately the drop fell, the man dying without a struggle.

Mary Ann Higgins was executed in Coventry in the month of August, 1831, for the murder of her uncle by poisoning him, and in the following December John Holloway was hanged for the murder of his wife. A great number of persons assembled to witness the latter execution, and as the doomed man appeared on the scaffold he was received with loud yells and groans. Calcraft then came up and adjusted the rope round his neck, and when the bolt was drawn the culprit swung fully in view of the immense multitude. He died rather hard, and when his struggles had ceased a sickening spectacle was seen, which caused Calcraft to be hooted from the scaffold and brought him into disfavour with the sheriffs and other officials. It appears that a man who throughout his lifetime had been afflicted with a very unsightly wen on his neck had persuaded Calcraft to permit him to come upon the scaffold for the purpose of trying the old superstitious method of endeavouring to cure the wen by rubbing or stroking it with the hand of a hanged man. As soon as Calcraft saw that life was extinct he unfastened the culprit's hands and unpinioned his arms, and, taking hold of one of the dead man's hands, commenced stroking the wen on the other man's neck with it. The people began to hiss and yell, thinking that Calcraft and the "patient" were having a lark and carrying on a sort of pantomime to please the people, and to show their indignation at the character and deeds of the dead culprit.

While Calcraft was thus employed, quite busy on the completion of the miraculous cure, the sheriffs mounted the scaffold and demanded an explanation of this disgraceful performance. Calcraft and the man replied that they were adopting the charm which often used to be performed, and which was said, in some books written in the Middle Ages, to be the best and only cure for a wen on a person's neck. The sheriffs at once ordered Calcraft to desist from his operation, as it was his duty, they said, to kill and not to cure

The House of Lords having rejected the new Reform Bill

brought into the House of Commons in 1831 by Lord John Russell, the whole country was indignant, and the greatest excitement prevailed from one end of the kingdom to the other, and finally culminated in "the Reform Bill riots," during which the gaols at Bristol and Gloucester were attacked and set on fire, and hundreds of prisoners set free. Great damage was done to property, the military being called out, and the result of the skirmishes which took place between the police, the military, and the people was that many persons were killed, about one hundred seriously injured, and three or four hundred received minor injuries. Several hundreds of the ringleaders of the rioters were afterwards arrested and charged with murder, rioting, and the vilful destruction of property. One hundred and eighty of these were committed for trial at Bristol, and no less than fifty were sentenced to death. The capital sentences were, however, commuted to transportation for life, with the exception of four cases, the men in these cases being left for execution as a warning to others. They were all four executed by Calcraft in January, 1832.

About the same time that the riots were taking place at Bristol similar disturbances broke out a Bath, Derby, Worcester, Coventry, Nottingham, and Manchester. Many of the rioters were arrested by the police, and five were sentenced to death. Two of these were respited, and on the 1st February Calcraft proceeded to Nottingham to carry the sentence out on the three men ordered to be hanged on the 2nd. Their names were George Beek, George Hearson, and John Armstrong. Hearson danced on the scaffold and called out to various people he recognised in the crowd whilst Calcraft adjusted the ropes, and the latter, running quickly down behind the gallows, drew the bolt, and the three men paid the penalty of the law.

One of the most shocking cases of murder, mutilation, and burning which we can find in the annals of crime took place at Leicester in the month of May, 1832. A man, named James Cook, murdered a Mr. Paas, cut the body up, and burnt portions of it. The full details of this horrible affair will duly appear in our columns. It only remains for me to say that Cook was executed by Calcraft on the 10th of August, and the body afterwards hung in chains on a gibbet thirty feet high.

In September, 1832, two youths named Kennedy and Brown were executed for a robbery and murder on the Thames, and in January of the next year William Johnson was hanged for the murder of Mr. Benjamin Crouch Danby, at Enfield Chase. It would be quite impossible to enumerate all the executions at which Calcraft officiated during his term of office, but it may be safely asserted that in the three years from 1829 to 1832 he executed more criminals than he did during any other three years of his appointment. He executed a large number of people in the provinces for various crimes, but we can only refer to the chief criminals who were hanged by Calcraft, leaving the details of the crimes to be fully dealt with in future pages of FAMOUS CRIMES.

Jonathan Smithers, a tobacconist, having a shop at 398, Oxford Street, was found guilty of wlfully setting fire to his premises for the purpose of obtaining the insurance money, and that by his act three persons lost their lives, and that he was guilty of wilful murder in every case. He was executed in July, 1832. In June, 1833, Calcraft was nearly hanging a man through a very serious error on the part of the Recorder of London in signing the death warrant of a postman who had obtained a reprieve. The prisoner, Job Cox, had been convicted at the Old Bailey for stealing a five-pound-note from a letter, but had been given to understand that he would only receive the lesser punishment. In the usual course, however, the Recorder forwarded the warrant to Newgate in the ordinary form, duly signed by Newman Knollys, and ordering "Job Cox for execution next Tuesday." The chaplain immediately informed the prisoner of the sad tidings, who became for a time quite speechless, as he had all along been under the impression that the sentence had been or would be commuted. Calcraft had been notified, and everything was in readiness. In the meantime the Chief Justice happened to be reading a newspaper containing the Recorder's report, and seeing that Job Cox was marked for execution, thought there must be sie mistake. He sent at once for the under-sheriff, who wt to the Recorder and asked him if he had not made a mike. The Recorder said no; he could not be mistaken, for tman was to be executed, and he firmly protested this till l at night. In this bewildering and unsatisfactory state things the sheriffs communicated with Lord Melbourne, e Home Secretary, and it was then ascertained that the mas sentence had been commuted, and that the Recorder wasrong, having signed the warrant quite by mistake. The m was then informed that his life was to be spared, and he became overwhelmed with joy. The general indignation was so strong on the matter that the Recorder at once sent in his resignation.

On the 15th of April, 1835, Mary Ann Burdock was executed at Bristol for the murder of Clara Ann Smith, by poisoning her. Fully fifty thousand people witnessed the execution, and Calcraft officiated in his usual capacity. The body was placed in a plain elm coffin and buried within the precincts of the gaol. The following inscription is carved on a large stone which marks the place where she is buried:

"Beneath this stone lie the remains of Mary Ann Burdock,
who was executed in this gaol
April 15th, 1835,
In her thirty-eighth year,
For the wilful murder (by poison) of
Clara Ann Smith,
Of this city."

The case excited the greatest interest throughout the country, and is one of the most remarkable on record.

We must pass over a still larger number of criminals of the ordinary class who were hanged by Calcraft for murders committed in fits of passion or for the purpose of robbery or through jealousy, or from other motives. A reiteration of all these would not be interesting to our readers, there being a great sameness in the details of many, and we shall therefore merely refer to the most notorious and interesting cases, the first being that of James Greenacre, who murdered and horribly mutilated a woman named Hannah Brown. Greenacre was executed at Newgate in 1837, and in 1840 Francis Benjamin Courvoisier was hanged for the murder of Lord William Russell. Robert Blakesley, who murdered Mr. Burdon in 1841, as fully described in Nos. 2 and 3 of FAMOUS CRIMES, was executed by Calcraft, as also was Daniel Good, in May, 1842; William Saville, in 1844; John Tawell, the Quaker, in 1845; the Mannings, in 1849; James Blomfield Rush, the Stanford Hall murderer, also, in 1849; William Palmer, the notorious Rugeley poisoner; William Bousfield, William Dove, Catherine Wilson, Franz Muller, the murderer of Mr. Briggs; the "Flowery Land" pirates, Walter Miller, John Owen, the inhuman monster who murdered the Marshall family, seven in number; Margaret Walters, Michael Campbell, and the last criminal he executed, John Godwin, whom he hanged at Newgate on the 25th May, 1874.

He then resigned his office, which he had held exactly forty-five years, and was succeeded by Marwood.

Notwithstanding the general belief and the assertion made in various pamphlets published in favour of the abolition of capital punishment that Calcraft was a "hideous, hard-hearted old wretch, who could mount the scaffold and strangle without remorse man, woman, or child," there is not any doubt that he was a simple-minded, kindly-natured man, and he was often seen, when going to the prison for his wages, with his grandchildren affectionately clinging to his hands and the skirts of his coat, and accompanied by a pet pony, to which he was greatly attached and which followed him about like a dog.

Calcraft died at his house in Poole Street, Hoxton, on Saturday, December 13, 1879, in the eightieth year of his age, having lived in the same house upwards of twenty-five years. He was buried at Abney Park Cemetery, and left behind him two sons and one daughter. He was never known to have been guilty of any offence against the laws of his country, and he died respected and esteemed by a large circle of personal friends.

A Cow of Another Colour.

LORD HALKERSTON, a judge of the Scotch Court of Session, was once addressed by a tenant with a woe-begone face, who said: "My lord, I am come to inform your lordship of a sad misfortune. My cow has gored one of your lordship's cows, and I fear it cannot live." "Well, then, of course, you must pay for it." "Indeed, my lord, it was not my fault, and you know I am but a very poor man." "I can't help that. The law says you must pay for it. I am not to lose my cow, am I?" "Well, my lord, if it must be so, I cannot say more. But I forgot what I was saying. It was my mistake entirely. I should have said that it was your lordship's cow that gored mine." "Oh, is that it? That's quite a different affair. Go along, and don't trouble me just now. I am very busy. Be off, I say!"

Bucknell, the Parricide.

HOW A YOUNG MAN MURDERED HIS GRANDPARENTS IN COLD BLOOD IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A FEW ARTICLES OF LITTLE VALUE, AND HOW STRANGELY THE DEED WAS BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

"A little more than kin and less than kind."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Hamlet," Act I. Sc. 2.

MANY terrible tragedies happen in country places, which, by reason of their very remoteness from the busy haunts of men, do not excite the attention and remark which their circumstances deserve. There are still many spots in what is left of rural England where the weekly Sunday newspaper is the only medium by which the inhabitants may learn what is passing in the outside world, and only a few, it may be, avail themselves even of this limited privilege. There are still villages far distant from any town or railway station, and in many of these the most sensational crimes have taken place, the circumstances attending which have hardly been known at all outside their own environment. If that is true in the present year of grace it was doubly so in the late fifties and early sixties, when the electric telegraph and the railway train, to say nothing of the local newspaper, were still in their infancy. Events occurred in the outlying villages which hardly found allusion to or comment in the London dailies of that time. Education, too, was much less general in the rural districts then than now, and superstition of the most outrageous kind still existed in places where the schoolmaster had hardly penetrated. Many of the most secluded spots, and, at the same time, the most innocently beautiful, in this island of ours have been the scenes of grim and relentless murder. The circumstances are forgotten now, perhaps, except by the old village gossips who have never moved a dozen miles from their own firesides and who still love to sit and chat over some long-forgotten crime that happened in their midst. Of such a type of crime is the Creech St. Michael murder, which occurred in the year 1858, and which very few are likely even to have heard of, let alone remember.

Yet there were circumstances connected with the event of more than ordinary interest and worth more than ordinary attention to the student of such things, and these circumstances make the case one fitly to be included in a gallery of famous crimes.

Creech St. Michael was and is a very remote village in the county of Somerset. It is situated in the heart of rural England, and agriculture is all it knows or deigns to know. As a matter of fact, the nearest town of any size or importance is Taunton, and that is some miles away, and in 1858 was less accessible than now. Creech St. Michael is a pretty and secluded spot, a typical "Zummerset" village, and any stranger who might happen to be passing through its one straggling street would little guess that it was once the scene of a very atrocious crime.

In the spring of 1858 there resided at a little public-house called the Cottage Inn, in the hamlet of Coombe, close to Creech St. Michael, a farmer and innkeeper named John Bucknell. He had lived there for some few years with his wife, Betsy Bucknell, and both were somewhat advanced in years. Small farming and innkeeping in such solitary spots as these were not the most prosperous undertakings at the time of which we are writing, but nevertheless old John Bucknell was reckoned fairly well-to-do by his neighbours, and he bore a good character for respectability and industry. He, like his wife, was of frugal mind, and they lived at the inn entirely alone, since there was not so much of serving customers to be done that the two old people could not do all that was needed, and the work required to be done in the farming line grew less year by year. Mr. and Mrs. Bucknell had a grandson. His name was John Baker Bucknell, and he was a young man of four or five-and-twenty at the time that the village in which he lived became suddenly notorious. Previous to that event he had borne a fair character for industry and sobriety, although he had always displayed something of a roving disposition, and had been for months at a time away from the village, his whereabouts unknown to his friends. In 1857 he was absent from the village for some time, and when at length he returned he did not take up his residence at his grandfather's inn, although the latter continued to employ the young man about the farm. In April, 1858, young Bucknell was sleeping at a cottage belonging to his grandfather, some half a mile from the Cottage Inn. It is certain, however, that, having been an inmate of the house up till the year 1857, he knew all the habits of his relatives—where they slept and where the money was kept. Indeed, he was fully aware of everything that went on beneath his grandfather's roof. The villagers noticed some change in the manners and habits of Bucknell on his return to the old man's employ. Previously he had been of fairly steady habits, but now the public-house appeared to have a greater attraction for him than work, and he spent a good deal of time in idling and a good deal of money—for such as he—in drinking at the various alehouses in the vicinity. It appears that he had run his grandfather into debt, and about the 10th of April, 1858, he had been afraid to go to the latter's inn with a ton of coals which he had bought for the old man, but sent his father instead. A day or two after this incident of the coals he was in a blacksmith's shop, and he picked up a rather heavy piece of iron and worked it into a kind of bullet and put it in his pocket and carried it away. The blacksmith inquired "what he wanted such a thing for?" and he replied that "He had occasion for it." Had the blacksmith so much as even guessed at the nature of the "occasion," young Bucknell might have lost the implement which he had been at such pains to fashion, and the lives of two harmless old people might even have been spared.

On the 12th of April Bucknell was in the company of a man named Read, and, in the course of conversation, the former asked some questions about the nature of rock-powder, and asked his acquaintance to procure him some. Read asked him for what purpose he required such a dangerous substance, and he explained that he wanted to give some to Miss Morris's chickens—an explanation which appears to have satisfied the unsuspecting Read. The next day—on the eve of the murder—there was the usual omnium gatherum of the males of the village at the Cottage Inn. In the evening the low-roofed taproom and kitchen were fairly full, and old Bucknell was doing a capital trade with mugs and cans of foaming ale. A man named Froome, a regular customer, was present, and he had been talking to the innkeeper in reference to some pigs he—Froome—had for sale. The old man was heard to say in reference to these pigs that "Froome need not be afraid to sell him them, as he had £40 by him." They spoke about the projected sale for some time, and though it is not clear that young Bucknell was present during this discussion, the fact that his grandfather was going to give £40 for some pigs and that he had the money by him became common knowledge, and no doubt in due course came to the young man's ears.

Later on the evening of the 13th a man named Walter Dyer met the latter, and he was then going towards the Cottage Inn. Dyer stopped and spoke with him, and he stated that he was going to make an appointment with his grandfather to go to Bridgewater the next morning. The two men parted then, but later on Dyer himself went to the inn and heard young Bucknell make and confirm the appointment with his grandfather. It was then about half-past nine, and from that time no human being except the murderer ever saw that old man alive again. What happened? At about half-past five o'clock on the morning of April 14 persons living near the Cottage Inn heard a sound as of a discharge of a gun, and this sound came as from the direction of the inn. Suspicion seems to have been aroused by the ominous sound of firearms in the stillness of the early morning, and about six o'clock Bucknell's father called up a

Mr. Morris, a neighbouring farmer, and this man observed young Bucknell's brother and his father talking together in the road. When Mr. Morris, aroused from sleep, had dressed and come down, both the Bucknells had gone, and he walked up towards the inn. Near the Cottage he encountered young Bucknell, and something seems to have prompted him to send the latter for a policeman, on which errand he immediately ran. Meanwhile, Mr. Morris proceeded to the inn, and outside he found John Bucknell's father. The latter had been engaged in trying to arouse the inmates, and was joined in this endeavour by Morris, but their joint efforts failed to make anyone hear, and when they tried the front door they found it locked. They then tried the door of the cider-house, but that, too, was fastened, and then they attempted to effect an entrance through the cellar. That door was not quite closed, but there was something heavy against it inside, so that they could not push it open. They

"THERE IS FATHER; MURDERED AND BURNING!"

were in much doubt as to how to make an entrance into the house, when they suddenly observed a little smoke rising through the tiles. They thought that the house was on fire, and determined at all costs to force their way in. The prisoner's father then pushed the cellar door wide enough open to admit his head, and at once explained the nature of the obstruction. With horror in his tones, he ejaculated, "Good God! there is father, murdered and burning!"

They then got the door of the cider-house open. By this time young Bucknell returned—without a policeman—and he made no attempt to enter the house by the cider-house door. He got on the roof of a small house, ran along it, and dropped down in a courtyard. They found the cellar door closed with a chain and padlock, but it was not locked, and here a truly horrid spectacle met their gaze. On the floor of the cellar, lying at full length, with his feet against the cellar door, was the body of the old man, with a gunshot wound through the head. He was dead and covered with blood, and it was seen that the straw on which the body lay was on fire, and burning briskly about the body. He was only just dead, and not burnt at all, though the clothes were slightly singed. Young Bucknell, who seemed less perturbed and dismayed than either his father or Morris, put the fire out by energetically treading and stamping on the burning straw, and then he was again sent off to the village for the constable. During his absence his father and Morris, fearful of what else the ill-fated Cottage might reveal, made a careful search of the premises, and finally found their way to the old people's bed-chamber upstairs. In the bed they found the poor old woman, presenting a most fearful sight. Her skull was smashed right in, her throat was cut from ear to ear, her arms and hands were slashed as though with a sharp knife, and the knuckle-bones of one hand were broken to pieces. The appalling spectacle filled the two men with horror, and for a time they were quite unable to make further search about the room. On recovering somewhat they looked about them more carefully, and they saw that the room was in great disorder. The boxes were ransacked, the various things they contained taken out and lying about the room, and there was every indication that robbery had been the motive for the diabolical double crime. Some silver spoons and a few other articles of value had not been removed—possibly because they were well known as the property of old Mr. Bucknell and would have been recognised had they been offered for sale in the immediate neighbourhood. The two witnesses of these calamities next proceeded to search for any weapon with which they could have been effected, and presently behind the door of a little parlour they found a gun which had quite recently been discharged.

Assistance now arrived and proper investigation began. Needless to say, the crimes created an enormous sensation for miles of country round, and the excitement grew when the neighbouring villages learnt that young Bucknell had been arrested on suspicion of being the murderer of his grandparents. The prisoner strenuously denied his guilt, and stated to the magistrate at one of his earlier examinations that he had no knowledge of or part or lot in the terrible

crimes. He said that when he could not get into the house he had fetched a ladder and placed it against the window and looked in, but could see nothing. He was thereupon brought again to the spot and requested to place the ladder as he had placed it before, and he brought it and placed it in some very slight marks on the ground. The moment the local magistrate got upon the ladder it sank in very considerably, and he could see perfectly well into the room, showing that the prisoner had not been speaking the truth. But other circumstances told greatly against the latter, and he was at length fully committed to take his trial at the Wells Assizes on August 9, 1858.

In the time that elapsed before the trial Bucknell showed little appreciation of the seriousness of his position. He stoutly maintained his entire innocence, and it must be confessed that only circumstantial evidence could be alleged against him. But that happened to be pretty strong, many facts—small in themselves but important when considered together—testifying to his being the actual murderer. The approaches to the court were thronged on the day of trial by crowds hailing from villages near and distant, and much anxiety evinced to get a glimpse of the prisoner, who maintained a calm and reserved demeanour.

"Who committed these dreadful murders?" asked the counsel for the prosecution in solemn tones, and he proceeded to lay the case for the Crown before the jury. There were two indictments, and it was clear that as regards the first—the murder of the old man—the perpetrator must have committed the act by means of a gunshot. That was proved by the terrible bullet-wound found in the victim's head, and it was also clear that the gun must have been discharged at some time about half-past five in the morning, when the sound of the shot was heard by several persons, who would testify to the hour. Was the prisoner the man who fired that shot? He, in a conversation with the magistrate, had stated that he went to the Cottage alone; that he went by appointment with his grandfather; that he could not get in and called out, but could not make anyone hear. He added that his father joined him then; that he informed him that he could make no one hear, and that he remained behind to try again while his father walked on to arouse Mr. Morris. The father arrived at Mr. Morris's about six o'clock, and counsel contended that there was time between half-past five—when the firing was heard—and six o'clock for the second murder to have been committed and the things disposed of. The prisoner's father and brother had been seen in the road talking together by Mr. Morris a little after six o'clock, and the prisoner was not with them. He was still at the Cottage Inn, vainly endeavouring, so he said, to effect an entrance; but it was at least strange that he entered the house at last by a way which was quite unknown to the others, who were trying to get into the premises. He had run along the roof, dropped into the courtyard, and entered the cellar. The way in which they sought to bring home the guilt of the prisoner was by a number of disconnected facts, all of which pointed to him as the author of these transactions. Specks of recent blood had been found on portions of his clothing, and his explanation of these incriminating stains was vague and unsatisfactory. The prisoner was perfectly well aware—he knew the habits of his grandparents from a previous residence with them—that the old man would probably be in the cellar about five o'clock, preparing the breakfast for his pigs. The prisoner knew how to get into the cellar without opening any of the outer doors. The murder was committed with a gun. The gun found in the parlour had been constantly used by the prisoner, and it was a peculiar weapon, inasmuch as it would not remain on the full cock; a person must hold the hammer back and pull the trigger at the same time, so that a stranger, entering the inn for burglarious purposes, as the defence might assume, would have had considerable difficulty in using it. The murder was committed with a bullet, for the mark of a bullet was found on the cellar door. It had been proved that the prisoner had made himself the possessor of something that would serve as a bullet. The powder that had been used was some kind of rock powder, such as had been supplied to the prisoner by the man Read a day or two before the murder. Of course, after the discovery of such a murder, diligent search was made everywhere for anything that could throw light upon it, and, in a straw-rick, it should be mentioned, was found a hay-knife. It had been carefully washed, but still there were marks of blood upon it. There was also found in the same spot a glove containing some money, which had been on the person of the old man. The hay-knife had been used by the prisoner in the course of his work, and he knew where to find it. It was concealed in the rick, and was evidently one of the instruments which had been used to slay the poor old woman, who had been murdered in her bed. In a pigstye was found, a day or two after the murders, a bundle of things tied up in a handkerchief, which latter belonged to the prisoner, and which he had often been seen wearing. It contained a letter, a five-pound Stuckey's note, some sixpences, some copper money, two pairs of silver sugar-tongs, a brooch, and a key. Most incriminating of all, the letter was addressed to the prisoner and had been written and sent to him a few days before the murders. The knife was one that had been lent to the prisoner by Walter Dyer, and it was in the former's possession, according to two witnesses, the night before the crimes. The sugar-tongs were identified as belonging to old Mrs. Bucknell, and the latter alone knew where she kept them. The five-pound-note had been changed by old Bucknell at the request of a friend a few days before in the presence of the prisoner. The key was the key to the front door of the inn, and that door had been found locked. When the prisoner was searched he became angry and excited, and when something was said about the letter and the knife he remarked that "he knew very well what that might be."

These facts were all sworn to by a great number of witnesses, and the counsel for the Crown confidently asked for a conviction.

The defence—conducted by Mr. Terence and another—

Her throat was cut.

made much of the fact that none of the stolen money was found upon the prisoner, and that no human eye had seen him by the house either just before or just after the sound of the firing. Circumstantial evidence was all very well, but it was liable to err, and the prosecution had failed to produce any evidence, apart from merely slightly suspicious circumstances, which positively identified the prisoner with the crimes. When, counsel asked, and how were they committed? If, as the prosecution alleged, the old man was murdered first, it was strange indeed that the gunshot had not aroused the old woman from her bed. Was it conceivable that the prisoner would deliberately fire at and kill the old man in the cellar at half-past five, be seen and spoken to by his own father at a few minutes after the half-hour, and then, on the departure of the latter, proceed upstairs and murder the old woman? That appeared to be the theory of the prosecution, and he asked the jury to believe that it was quite untenable. The statement made by the prisoner that he had an appointment with his grandfather early that morning had been proved to be perfectly true, and why should it not likewise be true that, on arriving at the house about a quarter to six, he was unable to get in or to make himself heard? His conduct throughout had been incompatible with guilt, and he had been the first to extinguish the fire which might have destroyed the body and the evidence of the crime.

The learned judge summed up with strict impartiality,

and the jury retired to consider their verdict. There was much speculation in court as to what that verdict would be, for the powerful address for the defence had made a considerable impression upon the thinking portion of those present, and it was felt that the case for the prosecution, though strong, was not conclusive. The jury, however, were satisfied as to the guilt of the prisoner, and he was found "guilty" and sentenced to death, the scene, as the prisoner again protested his ignorance of the murders, being a very impressive one.

Prior to his execution the prisoner maintained the same firm demeanour he had shown throughout. Though perfectly sane, he had the slow, bucolic temperament of the countryman, and though often chafing at his fate, he displayed little anxiety at his approaching end. The chaplain of the prison where he was confined took infinite pains to bring the prisoner to a befitting frame of mind, and held many conversations with him. The prisoner did not attempt to avoid the subject of the murders, and though he made no direct confession of his guilt, he is understood to have made admissions to the chaplain which sufficed to satisfy the public that the finding of the jury was a correct one.

Bucknell was in due course hanged at Taunton. He showed much fortitude during the last few hours before his doom, and evinced a sincere contrition for his sins on earth, although he made no direct allusion to his great crime. The execution was witnessed by a large concourse of people, and there is no room for doubt that the punishment was well deserved.

Some few years after these terrible murders the Cottage Inn was demolished and neat villa residences have been erected on the site where it and two or three other buildings stood in 1858.

Strange Sins.

A SEARCH through the old records of the Law Courts reveals many curious offences which, in the present day, would be looked on in a totally different light. Here are a few interesting samples: At the Guildford Quarter Sessions in 1769 a motion was brought before the justices praying them to recommend that a pardon be extended to a prisoner who had been convicted before them twelve months previously. He had been sentenced to two years' hard labour and to find sureties for his good behaviour for the seven following years. The magistrates consulted together and decided to adjourn the matter for another three months. What was the crime for which the prisoner was so heavily punished? Nothing more or less than chalking "45" on the back of a Justice of the Peace!

In the same year, for "disturbing the city of Gloucester with his enthusiastic cant," a Methodist preacher was flogged through the streets of the ancient town by order of the mayor.

At the Exeter Assizes in 1770 an attorney sued a gentleman for treading on his toe. It appears that the lawyer and the gentleman, a client of his, had a dispute. The solicitor called the defendant a liar, and was surprised when the enraged man stepped on his foot. The judge who tried the case said that one halfpenny was sufficient damages to give to the attorney.

But perhaps the strangest case of all was that of an Irishman who gave information in 1775 at Bow Street that he had been robbed of £373. He was most particular to state that the offence was committed "between sun and sun." His continually repeating this phrase led to suspicion, when Paddy got frightened and confessed that he had been told in Ireland that if he came to London and swore that he had been robbed "between sun and sun" the overseers of the parish in which he said he was robbed would immediately hand over the amount which he said he had lost, making no inquiries! He cooled his heels in gaol for a year as a reward for his gullibility.

Of civil curiosities there are legion, and it is not strange to find that breaches of the Tithe Law are plentiful. In 1773 the Barons of the Exchequer sat to consider whether a Yorkshire rector was entitled to a tenth part of a calf and of the milk of the mother cow. For years the tithe had been commuted on payment of a certain sum of money, but the parson got greedy, and thought that he ought to receive more, so he sued two of his parishioners, and the Barons ordered them to deliver a tenth to the rector, as claimed. Whether they actually did so, retaining nine-tenths of the calf for themselves, we are not informed. A few years later another rector prayed that the hay crop of one of his parishioners might be weighed, so that he could receive his tithe in kind. This was done, and the parson was set up with sufficient hay to last him the year.

POOR LAWS.

IT is a self-evident fact that those who possess a sufficiency of the good things of this world must make some sort of provision for their less fortunate brethren in order to save them from starvation. In the days of the prosperity of the Roman Empire it was impossible for a man to starve, for if he was indigent and could not work he was supported by his "patron," and was expected to amuse that "patron" while at dinner. The Greeks had a similar system of supporting the pauper. As we understand it, however, paupers were a very rare class, equal distribution of wealth, the necessity for work of some sort, and the inborn generosity of the rich reducing the distressed to a minimum. In Mediæval times the Church looked after the poor, and the wealthy readily gave money to support those who could no longer work or whom misfortune had overtaken. With the abolition of the monasteries, where the needy were always sure of food and shelter, came the necessity for state institutions, and thus the Poor Laws sprang into being. Their success is patent. No one who can possibly help "going into the house" will accept the begrudged charity which the Government offers; no one will accept the hospitality of the Union, knowing that a prison is preferable, save those who are absolutely compelled to do so. No one would wish for a worse ending for his enemy than to close his eyes in a workhouse. The Poor Laws must be voted a failure by every thinking person.

The origin of the Court of King's Bench has to be sought for in the days of the Conqueror, who was desirous of establishing a central court for the transaction of all important legal matters. To this end he saw fit to appoint that the great officers of state, headed by himself or his "Great Justiciar," should sit in the hall of his palace every morning for the transaction of business. From this the court was styled "Curia Regis," or "The King's Court," and sometimes "The King's Hall." For nearly two centuries this was the supreme court in the land, and those who were desirous of having wrongs redressed had on many occasions to appear before the sovereign in person. Then it was found that the other duties of the monarch rendered this mode of doing justice inconvenient, and the court was moved to Westminster Hall, where it remained till the last century. This custom of the sovereign hearing cases gave rise to the idea that the King is represented by every judge who goes on circuit. At one time the monarch travelled about the country, taking his justiciars with him, and the hearings were called assizes, from which the present terminology is derived. To-day every judge is an embodiment of the King, and disrespect shown to him is equivalent to insulting the sovereign.

Lawyers occasionally overreach themselves, especially when they indulge in flights of rhetoric. One of the most declamatory speakers who ever came before a judge to defend a prisoner was Mr. Randall Jackson, who for years was the counsel for the Honourable East India Company. His methods were peculiar, and, however bad his case, he invariably made an attempt to storm the court and carry his cause by sheer weight of eloquence. On one occasion he was arguing for his clients, and, turning to the judges of the Court of Appeal, he exclaimed, "In the Book of Nature, my lords, it is written——" At this point Lord Ellenborough, the Lord Chief Justice, interposed, "Will you have the goodness to mention the page, sir, if you please?" That speech ended abruptly.

They Weren't Going to be Fleeced.

A WEALTHY farmer once consulted a lawyer about a lawsuit in which he was about to engage, and was desirous of securing the services of the man of law; but the latter informed him that he had already been secured by the other side. "However," said he, "I can give you a letter of introduction to a professional friend of mine who will gladly undertake your case." The farmer accepted the offer, received the letter, and out of curiosity opened and read it. He was considerably surprised to find it contained the following verse:

"Here are two fat wethers fallen out together;
If you'll fleece one, I'll fleece the other,
And make 'em agree like brother and brother."

The case was amicably settled out of court, both clients being cured by the perusal of the above epistle.

Criminal Problems

HOW TO PREVENT CRIME—HOW WE TRY TO RECLAIM THE FALLEN.

KNOWING now the history of our prison system, we have to consider what its main object is and what means are taken to secure that object being fulfilled. In the first place, the idea that punishment is intended to be vindictive must be cast aside. A State which finds itself compelled to take vengeance on a single individual must be in a very bad way. As long ago as the days of Beccaria this view of punishment was exploded, and the rule which he laid down gradually spread throughout the whole of the civilised world, to the effect that torture should be abolished, as it was merely a brutal revenge by the strong on the weak.

Since his time there have been two main objects in punishment: first, the desire to deter other people from committing crime, and, secondly, the wish to reform the prisoner himself. Of these two the last is the modern aim of the penal systems of Europe, with the exception of that of Russia.

The deterrent object is futile as an ultimate aim in penology. Unless we expose our criminals to the gaze of the public, unless we revert to the barbarities of the Middle Ages, the sentence of the judge will seldom turn the friends and colleagues of a felon from their evil courses. It has been said, and wisely, that Smith does not feel the force of the blows on Brown's back. The same principle applies in regard to all punishments save the death penalty, where the State rids itself of an unworthy and diseased member by solemnly cutting it off.

The reformation of the criminal, then, is the object of our penal laws. How is this object attained—or rather, how do we strive to effect this reclamation?

In the main we attempt to bring back the errant by a system of enforced labour, which he can lighten for himself by his own industry and behaviour. In other words, we bribe the criminal to try and improve himself by holding out to him a series of rewards.

The moment after his conviction he commences at the bottom of the steep ladder, which, it is to be hoped, will lead him to a respectable future when the prison doors close behind him. His fare is much restricted, his food coarse and scanty, his labour trying. He is kept in solitude, save for the visits of the warder in charge and the daily calls of the governor, chaplain, and doctor. He has time to reflect on the misery which he has entailed on his friends and on himself by his unbridled conduct. Before him he sees a vista of years which have to be served before he again is free to walk about as other men do, before he has a free will of his own again.

The first depression once past, there is pointed out to him a method by which he can materially reduce his term of imprisonment. Daily he has to earn a certain number of marks by his behaviour and by his industry. He is able to earn a third as much again if he is zealous. When he has obtained a number of marks equivalent to the compulsory amount for his sentence, he is permitted to go free, on ticket-of-leave. Thus a prisoner can gain a remission of nearly a quarter of his total sentence.

The goal towards which every prisoner aims is the reduction of his sentence, and this "mark system" is an important factor in the reformation process. But it is not all. The average convict is not a man of education. He has doubtless attended some sort of a school in his youth, but he has forgotten all that he learnt save how to read and write. Therefore, he must be taught afresh, so that he may appreciate the lessons which he has come into prison to learn. A schoolmaster is provided for him, and when he has made sufficient progress in his scholastic training he is excused from attending school any more.

That done, his mind must be developed, which is done by supplying him with wholesome literature and allowing him a certain time every day to read the same.

These luxuries might not appeal to all, so the more carnal portion of the man is tempted by the knowledge that when he has behaved himself for a certain time, and proved himself anxious to improve, he will receive better food and in greater quantity.

The chaplain looks after his spiritual welfare, argues with him, strives to show him the folly of his ways, and urges him to turn over a new leaf when his time of punishment is ended. To enable the convict to do this he is taught a trade, if he shows the least aptitude for learning one, and if not he is employed in the commoner class of labour, which will at least fit him to earn his bread as a navvy or dock hand.

The health of the prisoner is carefully seen to; he can have the advice of a doctor whenever he requires it, and, if he be really ill, every necessary is supplied him. To add to all, if he is industrious he can earn a small sum to give him a start in the world when his days of probation are done, and, if he be willing, he can be introduced to the Prisoners' Aid Society, which will look after him, house and feed him, and find him employment. With all this, however, many relapse into crime again, and, curiously enough, most ascribe their downfall to the too persistent attentions of the police. Nevertheless, we can pride ourselves that, though it has its defects, our prison system is far better than that of any other country. Year by year shows that, on the whole, prisoners are better behaved, while the number that relapse into evil-doing is steadily decreasing.

We may add that a large number of criminals are watched by the police with a view to preventing them from committing offences, and it may be that this has a good deal to do with the reduction which has taken place in the calendars. As we said in our first article, prevention is better than cure, but the root of the whole matter is the treatment of the children.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

A Weird Use for a Finger.

ONE of the strangest uses to which the finger of a dead man has been ever put is to be seen in the collection of curios in the possession of W. H. Saunders, Esq. The finger has been mummified and turned into a tobacco stopper. The digit in question was formerly a part of James Hill, better known as "K. Jack, the Painter," who was hanged for arson, in 1777. His gibbeted body long decorated the Blockhouse Beach at Portsmouth.

Selling a Wife.

IN the early part of the last century there was a widespread idea that if a man wished to divorce his wife he had only to take her to the nearest market-place with a halter round her neck and there sell her to the highest bidder. The last case in which this was actually done was in 1830, when a man took his wife into Melksham Fair and disposed of her to a man named Watts for half-a-crown. The law stepped in and punished man and wife, but the purchaser was allowed to go free with the loss of his money and his bargain.

Hair-breadth Escapes.

IT is only comparatively recently that a flaw in the indictment under which a prisoner is charged can be rectified in Court; prior to then unless the indictment was absolutely perfect the prisoner could not be convicted, and many a rogue has owed his escape from the gaol or the gallows to that fact. For instance, in 1837, a man named Curtis and his mistress were charged with having stolen some mutton, the carcase of a sheep being found on their premises, which was identified by a neighbouring farmer. Their counsel objected that his clients had stolen a living sheep if they had stolen anything. This, indeed, was the case, but because the indictment was faulty they both escaped the penalty of the law. Similarly some years previously one Moore was just saved from the gallows because one of the five sovereigns which she was proved to have stolen was found to be bad.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

AMI.—Jean Baptiste Carrier was one of the leaders of the Reign of Terror. After the fall of Robespierre he was justly sent to the guillotine in 1794.

FRANCO.—What we know as "King's evidence" is virtually unknown in France, the "juge d'instruction" obtaining a confession from the accused by skilful questioning wherever possible.

L. B. L.—We have said before that the last public execution in London was that of Barrett, the Fenian, in 1868, and the last hanging in Newgate took place in 1901, when Woolff, the Tottenham Marsh murderer, paid the extreme penalty.

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